

# THE ARGOSY.

APRIL, 1887.

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## LADY GRACE.

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD, AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

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### CHAPTER VII.

WITH SIR WILLIAM CHANT.

IN the handsome drawing-room of their town residence in Berkeley Square, sat the Dean of Denham and Lady Grace Baumgarten. It was a fine evening in April; the dinner-hour was approaching, and they were awaiting a guest: an old friend whom the Dean had met in the street unexpectedly that day, and invited.

Years have elapsed, and the Dean, approaching fifty now, is more portly than he was wont to be; but Lady Grace carries her age well, and looks not a day older than the period a woman never confesses to having passed—five-and-thirty. But in the Dean's face there is a look of anxious care: what can the flourishing Dean of Denham have to trouble *him*?

A great deal more than the world at large suspected. Gifted with an aristocratic wife, and she with aristocratic tastes and habits, the Dean had fallen long and long ago into a more expensive rate of living than his means permitted. Embarrassment followed, as a necessary consequence; trifling enough at first, and easily put off—not done away with, but deferred. But the plan does not answer; it is something like the nails in the horse-shoe, which doubled as they went on; and Dr. Baumgarten had now attained to a height of perplexity in his pecuniary affairs, not frequently reached by a dignitary of the Church.

Half the labour of his later life had been to hide it from Lady Grace, and he had in a great measure succeeded. She could not avoid knowing that they were in debt, but she had no conception to what extent, and debt is rather a fashionable complaint. She also found that the Dean invariably ran short of ready money; but that is not uncommon either.

In one sense of the word, the debts which had gathered about them might be put down to the score of Lady Grace. At the death

of her mother, Lady Avon, she had come in to all the property that would be hers—two thousand a year. With that and the Dean's income, they might have lived sufficiently well. But Lady Grace had little idea of the value of money, and was given to thinking that one pound would go as far as four or five. Living in Berkeley Square was her doing, and was quite wrong and ridiculous with their narrowed means.

It had come about in this way. Two years before the present chapter opens, Lady Grace had come to London on a visit to her brother. Lord Avon had never married, and spent much of his time abroad, keeping his house—a small one—in Piccadilly done up in brown holland and lavender. However, he took possession of it for a season, invited his sister to stay with him, and the Dean, if he could come. A season in town was perfectly delightful to Lady Grace.

"I shall not be able to do without it, now that I have tasted its sweets again," she said to her brother one day. "I think I must look out for some furnished house to be had cheaply, Henry, and take it."

"All right," said his lordship, who had given in to Grace from the time she was a baby.

Lady Grace found a charming house in Berkeley Square. "Just the thing," she observed to her brother and to the Dean, who was in town for a week. "It is only a little house, and may be had on almost one's own terms: may be rented yearly, furnished; or we may purchase the lease and the furniture as it stands. Of course, the latter is out of the question, but we might hire it. It belonged to an old lady who is now dead."

"We cannot possibly afford it," whispered the Dean aside to Lord Avon. "Pray don't encourage Grace to think of it."

"What's that you are saying, Ryle?" cried his wife. "Not afford it! Oh, but we must; we will afford it. I'll economise in other matters."

Lord Avon generously came to the rescue. He purchased the lease, which had twelve years to run, he bought the furniture, and made a present of it to his sister.

So there was no rent to pay in Berkeley Square, and this was the second year they had been in it.

But the money went all too quickly in other ways. What with the household they kept up, the entertainments Lady Grace liked to give, and the expenses of the children, Dr. Baumgarten's income ought to have been doubled.

Gertrude had her governess—a French lady, who spoke and taught the three languages equally well: French, English, German. Mademoiselle Léon was a most desirable individual, and a finished instructress; but these exceptional governesses have to be paid according to their merits. Gertrude's masters were also expensive.

Charles was at Oxford; and though not especially extravagant, he

did not live as a hermit. It all takes money. Cyras? What of Cyras?

Cyras had given trouble. Was it likely to be otherwise? It had always been the Dean's intention that Cyras should follow his own calling, the Church. Cyras knew this, but had not objected, although never intending to fall in with it. Make a parson of him! Dress him up in a black coat and a white choker! the youngster was wont to say behind the Dean's back. No! He'd rather go in for the clownship at Astley's; rather be a jockey at Newmarket; rather hew timber in the backwoods of America; rather perch himself on a three-legged stool at a dark desk in a city office—yes, even that. None of the fellows who went in for those things need have a conscience; but a parson must have one; so he'd leave the Church to those who liked consciences.

This treason was reported to the Dean, and he ordered Cyras before him, and administered a stern rebuke. But he could make no impression upon him. Cyras argued the matter out; he was not insolent, but he was persistent; he had not grown less independently reckless with his advancing years. Reckless, that is to say, of other people's opinions when they clashed with his own. Though, in spite of the Dean's reproaches to the contrary, the objection to enter the Church proved Cyras not to be so totally devoid of thought as his father assured him he was. Cyras was eighteen then, and was to have gone to college in the autumn.

"It won't be of any use my going to Oxford, papa," the handsome young fellow urged. "To send me there would be waste of time and money. I have quite as much learning as I shall ever want. Make Charley into a parson instead of me; it won't go against *his* conscience."

"You know, Cyras, that Charles has set his heart upon the bar."

"And a very good calling too," rejoined Cyras, equably. "You are in the Church yourself, papa—one of its shining lights, you know; but that's no reason why you should force a son into it."

"What is to become of you, Cyras?"

"Of me?—oh, anything. What I wanted was to have a commission bought for me in the army, but—"

"I have explained to you that I could not afford it," interrupted the Dean, with some agitation, for it brought before him the vexatious state of his finances. "Would you wish to remain a burden upon me, Cyras? Do you expect me to keep you for ever?"

"Not a bit of it, father," said Cyras, heartily. "I'd rather make money myself, and keep *you*."

The Dean could hardly forbear a smile.

"How would you make it?" he asked.

"Oh, go out to the gold diggings and dig it up—something or other of that sort."

"Don't talk recklessly," reprobated the Dean.

"As I could not have a commission bought, I don't much care what I do," Cyrus was beginning : but Dr. Baumgarten laid his hand upon his arm.

"Cyrus, I have told you the truth," he said, with emotion. "I had not the purchase-money, neither could I have made you the necessary yearly allowance. My boy, you little know how hard up I am, and how claims press upon me daily. Sometimes I think the trouble will be too much for me."

"I'm sure *I* will not add to it," cried Cyrus, in his good-natured, careless way. "I shall get along first-rate, father, you'll see."

"If you would only enter the Church, Cyrus, I could take care of your preferment ; you'd be provided for for life. Don't bring up that nonsense to me again about conscience. I should be deeply grieved to think that a son of mine could have aught of sin upon his conscience to unfit him for entering upon a sacred calling."

"Oh, it's not that," said Cyrus, lightly. "I wouldn't mind taking Orders to-morrow, but a parson must lead so straitlaced a life—at least, if he is what a parson ought to be—and I couldn't do that, you know. I couldn't, indeed, father. I should be turning Roman Catholic, or something of that sort, to get rid of my gown—Methodist parson, perhaps."

The Dean sighed. It seemed a hopeless case.

"I will talk with you again, Cyrus," he said ; "but I do fear you are going to be another source of trouble and expense to me."

The opportunity for further talk did not come. Cyrus disappeared from home ; and the next heard of him was that he was on board ship, sailing for New Zealand. His letter to the Dean, despatched by the pilot who had conveyed the ship down Channel, was characteristic of him.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—Here I am, on board the good ship *Rising Star*, a clipper, a 1, bound for Wellington. I know you think me careless and indifferent, and all the rest of it, but you may believe me when I say that I would not willingly bring trouble on you for all the world. I know I shall get on over there. They'll give me a place at once in Brice's shipping house. I'm sure of that, if I choose to take it—I've spoken to Brice here, and he says so ; but I may, perhaps, find my way to Melbourne instead, and try my luck at the gold-fields. I don't mean to be any more expense at all to you ; I hope I shan't be, and I've shipped as a common sailor before the mast to work my way out, rather than ask you for the passage money. I daresay you'd not have given it me if I had asked ; you'd have forbidden me to go, and I thought the safest way was to say nothing about it. So I chiselled a young sailor fellow out of his papers—he had broken his leg, and must lie up for a year to come—and I went down to the office, rigged out in a glazed hat and pea-jacket, stood there as bold as any sailor among them, and signed articles for the

*Rising Star.* She is fourteen hundred tons burthen. I'll write again when we reach Wellington; or, if I don't like the look of things out there, I'll come back in the ship. And with best love to you, dear papa, and to mamma, and Charley, and Gertrude,

"I am your affectionate son,

"CYRAS."

Cyras did not come back in the ship. The Dean transmitted him some money to Wellington, and Cyrus sent it back again. He sent with it a loving letter of thanks, telling his father that he was getting enough to keep him, and did not want money. After that they heard from him at intervals, from Australia or from New Zealand as the case might be. According to his own account, he was always flourishing, and he once sent a lovely gold bracelet to Gertrude, and a twenty-pound note to Charley.

Three years had elapsed since his first departure, and now Cyrus was back again. Not to remain, he told them; only to see them and the old country once more. Charles—I think this has been said—was keeping his terms at Oxford, and the Dean and his wife were living in Berkeley Square. Cyrus seemed to have brought over plenty of money. He had settled down as clerk in a shipping house at Wellington—Brice and Jansen—and had got six months' leave from it. He was twenty-one now, and but little changed—gay, rattling, reckless in speech as of old; but exceedingly handsome, exceedingly like what the Dean had been before him. Only in one point did he not resemble his father, and that was in stature: the Dean was tall and stately, Cyrus was but little above middle height, and very slight.

"And what have you been doing with yourself to-day, Cyrus?" enquired the Dean of his son, who was singing to himself in an undertone, as he stood at the window looking out on the square. "I wanted you this morning, but you were not to be found."

"I went to Norwood to see Aunt Charlotte," replied Cyrus. "She took me into the Crystal Palace; we lunched there."

"Oh, indeed. How is she?"

"Flourishing," said Cyrus. "She fired off no end of questions at me about the Brices of Wellington."

"Naturally," remarked the Dean. "Her husband and Brice of Wellington are brothers."

"Are the Brices of Wellington nice people, Cyrus?" asked Lady Grace.

"The nicest people going, mamma."

"And well off?"

"They just are. Why Brice and Jansen is about the first shipping firm in Wellington."

The reader may not have forgotten that Charlotte Dane, sister to poor Edith, married a Mr. George Brice of London, with whom she

had become acquainted when he was visiting his uncle, Brice the surgeon at Great Whitton. It was this Aunt Charlotte Cyras had been to see. She lived in a handsome house at Norwood, for they had become very wealthy.

And whilst he was speaking, Brice the surgeon came in ; for he was the guest expected. After greeting Lady Grace and the Dean, he turned to Cyras, holding him before him by the lappets of his coat, gazing intently into his face. He had not seen Cyras for three years.

"What a likeness !—what a likeness ! It is yourself over again," he said to the Dean. "Just what your face was at his age."

Dr. Baumgarten laughed. "You did not know me when I was his age, Brice. Nor for five or six years after it."

"It is a wonderful likeness, is it not, Lady Grace ?" went on the surgeon.

"I have always said so," she answered.

Gertrude entered ; a beautiful girl, with the fair delicate skin and the proud blue eyes of her mother. She was a pleasant girl, not self-willed as Grace used to be, but sweet and gentle.

"How is Lord Avon ?" asked the surgeon.

"Quite well," said Grace ; "and in London. He was on the Continent all last year, but this year he is at home."

"As good natured as ever, I expect."

"Just the same," laughed Lady Grace.

They sat, after dinner, in the drawing-room talking together until nine o'clock, when Mr. Brice had to leave them. He was engaged to a gathering at a noted physician's house near Hanover Square : a dozen or so of learned men, chiefly medical men, were about to meet to discuss a discovery of the day.

"I wish you would accompany me," said the doctor to his host. "You could not fail to appreciate what you will hear, and I'm sure you will not repent the introduction to Sir William Chant. He has hardly his equal."

"I should like to go very well," said Dr. Baumgarten.

"Any room for me ?" spoke Cyras quaintly.

"To be sure," assented Mr. Brice. "Come along."

This visit need not have been recorded but for a matter which grew out of it. They spent a pleasant and profitable hour or two at Sir William Chant's, the Dean especially enjoying the society of Sir William himself, to whom he took a great liking ; and they came away soon after eleven o'clock. In passing a side street, they suddenly fell upon a commotion ; wild shouts arose from the mob, while flames were pouring out of the windows of one of the houses. Cyras made for the scene at a gallop ; the surgeon ran ; Dr. Baumgarten went after them. There was much pushing in the street, everyone wanting to get where he could best stare at the windows. In the midst of it all an engine, with its firemen, clashed and dashed round the corner, scattering the people right and left.

Cyras bethought himself that his father and the old doctor might not be quite so able to battle with a mob as he, and he looked about for them. A minute's search and he came upon his father on a doorstep. The Dean had apparently sat down, and was lying back as if he had no life in him.

"Father!" exclaimed Cyras. "Father!"

Looking closely, Cyras saw that the face was very pale, and that a blue tinge seemed to be drawn in a circlet round the mouth. The Dean gasped once or twice and opened his eyes.

"Have you been hurt, father? Are you ill?"

Dr. Baumgarten rose up, with the help of Cyras. "No," said he; "no, I have not been hurt. It is a fainting-fit that I have now and then; not often."

"A fainting fit!" repeated Cyras, wondering what a tall, fine, strong man, like the Dean, could have to do with fainting-fits.

"It's something of the sort. My breath seems to leave me suddenly; I have to fight for it; and then a faintness comes on," added the Dean, as he walked away, upon the arm of Cyras.

Cyras had picked up odds and ends of notions on his travels. "I suppose the heart's all right, father?" he said.

"Oh dear yes," replied Dr. Baumgarten. "What with Denham and Great Whitton and private matters, I think I'm a little over-worked. Sometimes I feel as though I wanted rest; that's all, Cyras."

"I should take rest," observed Cyras.

"That's easier said than done, my boy."

"Look here, father: put the Deanery and the other places out to nurse for a few months, and come over with me to New Zealand, when I go back again. It would set you up for the rest of your life; you'd come back stronger than any parson in the Denham diocese."

"Hush!" said the Dean, hastily withdrawing his arm from that of Cyras. "There's Brice."

Mr. Brice, having extricated himself from the crowd, was standing at the end of this quiet street, looking out for them.

"It's a bad fire," he remarked, unsuspiciously, "but we can do no good, and are best away from the fray. And now I'll wish you good-night; for my road lies that way, and yours this."

"You are sure you will not be able to come to us again in Berkeley Square?" said the Dean, as their hands met and clasped.

"Can't," said Mr. Brice. "I'm promised to-morrow morning to George and Charlotte at Norwood, and I go down home in the evening. It has been a great thing, my getting this little bit of a holiday. You'll remember to deliver my messages to my nephew and the rest, Cyras, when you get back to Wellington?"

"I'll remember them, sir."

"Father," began Cyras, the following morning, when, as chance

had it, they were alone for a few minutes after breakfast: "don't you think it might be as well if you saw a doctor?"

It was exactly what the Dean *had* been thinking. But he did not acknowledge it.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered in a careless tone.

"I should just have told old Brice right out last night," said Cyras.

"One can't very well talk of things in the street," returned the Dean.

Dr. Baumgarten went out a little before one o'clock, on his way to Sir William Chant's. He thought it a good time to catch him: he would probably have got rid of his morning patients. An idea had struck him that he would rather tell his tale of doubtful sickness to Sir William, a stranger, than to a medical man who knew him better. Such a fancy penetrates to many of us.

Sir William would be disengaged in a few minutes, the servant said; he was then with his last patient. Dr. Baumgarten handed the man his card—"The Dean of Denham"—but desired that it should not be given in until his master was alone.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Dean; very pleased that you should have called upon me," was Sir William's warm greeting when his stately visitor was ushered in.

"What shall you say if I tell you that I have come as a patient?" returned the Dean.

"I hope not."

"Yes, it is so. That is—I have—have—I have experienced a little annoyance once or twice, which perhaps it may be as well to speak of," rapidly continued the Dean, getting over his momentary hesitation. "It amounts to nothing, I daresay."

"You do not look as if much were amiss with you, sir," smiled Sir William. "Will you take this chair?"

The chair he touched was the patients' chair, facing the light. Sir William sat opposite to it in the shade.

"Before I enter upon the matter, Sir William," said the Dean as he took the seat, "I must get you to make me a promise. It is a very simple request, and I am sure that you will deal openly with me. If you find reason to suspect that there is anything radically wrong, will you candidly avow it to me?"

"I wonder what it is?" thought Sir William. "Something, I am sure. Do you suspect any particular mischief yourself?" he inquired.

"Well, I suppose I ought to do so."

"The heart?" queried Sir William.

"That, if anything. Possibly it may arise only from my being somewhat overdone with work and other matters. I have been attacked at times rather curiously."

"Will you describe the attacks?"

"There is not much to describe," said the Dean. "A sudden

stoppage of the heart, accompanied by a strange inward fluttering, which I feel to my fingers' ends ; and then a faintness ; almost, but not quite, amounting to a fainting-fit."

Sir William Chant put another question or two as to symptoms, and then passed on to another phase.

"How frequently do you have these attacks ?"

"Very seldom indeed. I've only had about half-a-dozen in all. The first time was after boating, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford ; the last time was yesterday evening ; and that covers a good many years, you perceive."

"Yesterday evening !" repeated the doctor, struck with the remark. "Not when you were here ?"

"No ; afterwards. In going home we got into a crowd collected at a fire. I ran, and otherwise exerted myself, and the attack came on."

"And sometimes, I expect, it has come on from mental emotion ?"

"Yes ; more frequently so. What do you make of it, Sir William ?"

Sir William Chant smiled, rose, and took some instrument from a drawer in his table. "You must let me test your organs a little before I can give you an answer."

"Beginning with the heart, I suppose ?" observed the Dean, as he unbuttoned his clerical coat and waistcoat.

"Beginning with it and ending with it, I fancy," thought the physician ; but he did not say so.

The examination, a slight one, was over. The instrument was in its keeping-place again, the clerical coat and waistcoat had been refastened, and the gentlemen sat, each in his chair, facing one another as before.

"Well ?" said the Dean, for Sir William did not speak.

"Yes, undoubtedly the seat of mischief lies in the heart. It is not quite as sound as it ought to be."

"Am I in danger ? I must beg of you to tell me the truth," added the Dean, finding he was not immediately answered.

"My dear Mr. Dean, in one sense of the word you are in danger ; all people must be in danger whose heart is in the condition of yours ; but the extent of the peril depends very much upon yourself."

"You mean that with tranquillity it may be reduced to a minimum ?"

"I do. With perfect tranquillity maintained of mind and of body, your heart may serve you for years and years to come."

"I may not be able to command that."

"But you must do so. My dear sir, *you must*. I do not know which would be the worse for you, worry of mind or undue exertion of body."

"He would be a clever man who is able to ensure himself a life exempt from worry," remarked the Dean.

"I mean emotional worry ; worry that runs to agitation," said Sir

William. "Of small worries we all have enough and to spare; life is full of them. Even these I would have you meet calmly."

"If I can."

"Some matters will not admit of an 'if,' Dr. Baumgarten; must not be allowed to do so. Every individual has so much under his control. And—I think I may understand that with each attack you have had, you were able to trace it to some emotion or other. Is that not so?"

"It is so."

"Well, then, what more need of argument? Keep emotion from you and you will not have the attacks."

"On the other hand—I think I am to understand that should any undue agitation arise, despite every precaution, to induce an attack, it might be fatal? My life may pass away in it?"

"Yes. But you must not allow it to arise."

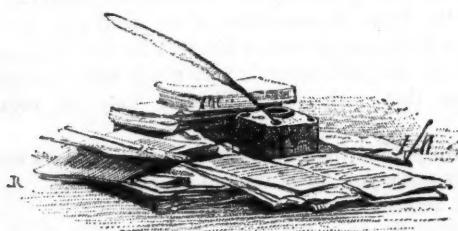
With a few quiet words of thanks, Dr. Baumgarten arose; he put his fingers into his waistcoat pocket.

"No, no, no; no fee from you, Dr. Baumgarten," spoke the physician, warmly. "You were my honoured guest last night; let me have the pleasure of regarding our interview to-day as one of friendship. And be sure to come to me whenever you want advice of any kind."

"So be it, Sir William; and I thank you greatly," answered the Dean, as their hands met.

He walked slowly along the street on his return to Berkeley Square, deep in thought, unable to put away an impression which had taken hold of him—that for him the dread fiat had gone forth. It seemed as sure as though he heard the death-bell tolling for him in his coffin.

*(To be continued.)*



## MRS. HENRY WOOD.

*In Memoriam.*

THE pen may well fall from the hand in attempting its task, though only a few pages can be given to this present record. If a longer Biography should be written, it must come when Time has softened the first keenness of the blow; though the loss, the sorrow, the silence, and the vacant chair can only grow more real and more vivid in the coming years.

But it is meet that a few words, whatever the effort, should be given at once in memory of one whose name has been so long a household word in the pages of this magazine, and has contributed so greatly to its remarkable success.

It is not only a painful but a difficult task to write the following pages. To describe the personal charm of Mrs. Henry Wood is almost as impossible and hopeless as it would be to attempt to embody the perfume of the rose, or to give form and expression to the scent of the violet.

Her inner life was so beautiful that it can only be a record of praise upon praise; and it might have seemed more graceful and appropriate had the tribute come from some other hand. Unfortunately none other exists. Mrs. Henry Wood's life was so self-contained that only those connected with her by the closest bonds of relationship knew her intimately. Even with these there was ever a certain reticence which made them feel that in some sense her life was lived apart from them and from the whole world. There was within her a yet higher and deeper life into which none were permitted to intrude.

In presence of the solemn Mystery of Death, also, all other thoughts and considerations must yield. The ordinary rules and conventionalities of life have no place. In the most sacred of all earthly ties—that existing between mother and son—scope may be allowed and indulgence given, and praise that might have come better from others must be looked upon as Sorrow's tribute placed reverently upon the tomb of the sacred departed; making that natural and becoming which might not be quite so under other circumstances.

I can only affirm that the following pages are a most unworthy, most unexaggerated record of a singularly perfect life, to which it is as impossible to render justice as it is impossible, in mere words, to describe the influence of everything that is lovely and of good report.

## I.

MRS. HENRY WOOD was born when the present century was still young. It has gone forth to the world—I know not how—that she

was born in the year 1820. This is a mistake. She was born on the 17th of January, 1814, and consequently, at the time of her death, was seventy-three years of age. Yet no one ever thought or spoke of her as being old. She had the rare gift of perpetual youth. Her eye was as bright, her face as young, her complexion as fair and brilliant, her mind as sparkling, and her heart as green, as they had been fifty years ago.

She was christened Ellen, and was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Price, one of the largest glove manufacturers in the city of Worcester; as his father had been before him.

Mr. Thomas Price, an only child, inherited considerable property from his father, who died at the early age of forty-seven, and had been known as the finest and handsomest man in the Faithful City. His son Thomas had received what would have been a very advanced education even in these days, and was a very exceptional one in those. He was a man of remarkable intellect, of great refinement and taste.

I once saw him, and only once, when my parents came over to England on a short visit, and brought me with them. I was very young at the time, and can just remember the effect made upon me by a venerable gentleman, with calm and dignified manners and a subdued voice; with an abundance of white hair and a face beautiful in age. Perhaps what most impressed me were the large frills he always wore to his shirts, and about which he was very fastidious, even after they had gone out of fashion. His hands were white and delicate as a woman's.

Child as I was—I could not have been more than five years old—the impression made upon me by this vision of age and dignity, the certain awe and veneration it created in a childhood that was peculiarly impressionable, never passed away. Yet the interviews, as far as I was concerned, were few and short, and had taken place in London. He had come up to town to visit his daughter, as she was unable, on that occasion, to go down into Worcestershire.

## II.

UP to the age of seven, Mrs. Henry Wood was brought up in the house of her grandmother, a lady who adorned her home, but took no part in its arrangement. This was relegated to the care of a housekeeper, who managed everything, and was responsible for the duties of the other servants of the household. She was called Mrs. Tipton, was a very original character, and was never seen in anything but black silk. She had been with her mistress from the time of her marriage and remained with her until her death.

The little child was Mrs. Tipton's especial charge, though she also had her own particular attendant to wait upon her. She also had her own special rooms, and though so great a favourite with her grand-

mother, was only allowed to be with her at stated times. Children in those days, it is needless to say, were brought up far more strictly and severely than they are in these.

It was the housekeeper, Mrs. Tipton, who generally accompanied the little child in her morning walks, whilst in the afternoons she was always expected to drive out with her grandmother. Her place in the carriage was never filled. The housekeeper, when no one else was present, generally accompanied them in these drives, in attendance upon her little charge. It was on such an occasion that she gave expression to one of her quaint sayings, which was ever afterwards remembered against her.

They were passing a churchyard at some distance from Worcester, when Mrs. Tipton, looking up, suddenly exclaimed :

"Oh, ma'am ! what a healthy, *bracing* spot for a churchyard ! How I should like to be buried there when my time comes ! "

She was promised that her wish should be regarded, but whether it was ever carried out in the end, I do not remember to have heard.

It was in one of their morning walks that the housekeeper, whilst probably saving the life of her charge, also very possibly laid the foundation for much future delicacy.

They were passing through a field, when suddenly an infuriated bull, attracted by a red dress or hood that the child was wearing, made a rush, and charged at them across the field.

Mrs. Tipton, paralyzed with fear, took the child in her arms, and fled for her life. She gained the hedge, but no point of exit. The bull was upon them ; and scarcely knowing what she did, she threw the little girl high over the hedge into an adjoining field.

How she eventually escaped herself, she never could quite tell afterwards ; but she did escape. On reaching the next field, she found her charge lying where she had fallen ; pale, but apparently un-hurt.

Genius, in childhood, is said to be either very awakened or very backward. In my mother's case it was the former. At seven years old she had gone through, without effort, the studies of girls twice her age. She could repeat, rapidly and correctly, whole poems, such as Gray's "Elegy" and the "Deserted Village;" and at ten years old she had read a great part of Shakespeare. At all times her memory was marvellous, almost miraculous. It was only last year that one of her children having asked a question with regard to Sterne's "Maria," she immediately and fluently repeated two whole pages bearing upon the question. Yet she had never opened the book since she was thirteen : an interval of sixty years.

With regard to her lessons, her daily tasks, she never had to read them through more than once, after which she could repeat them fluently. History was her favourite and beloved study ; geography she disliked. All her wishes in her early home were regarded. She

was indulged in every possible way, but could not be spoilt. It may be said, with all truth and with all reverence, that the Hand of God was upon her, and that she was ever in His keeping. "Thou wilt hide me under the shadow of Thy wings, and I shall be safe from fear of evil." I have never heard this verse read in church without thinking of my mother.

Her grandmother supplied her with unlimited pocket-money ; but where in most cases it would have been exchanged for dolls, toys, and bonbons, in my mother's case it was invariably spent in books.

When she was seven years old, Mr. William Price died after a few months' illness ; an illness which had baffled the skill of all physicians, who could not even guess at the nature of his malady. He suffered no pain ; yet no relief could be obtained ; no food could be digested. He gradually faded and passed away.

After death, when lying in his coffin, it was thought right to take in his little grand-daughter—of whom he had been so fond, and who had returned all his affection—for one look before the last sad office was performed and the face was for ever closed to mortal eyes.

The act was, no doubt, prompted by a good and kindly feeling, but it was a mistake. The child, peculiarly imaginative, sensitive and impressionable to the last degree, was so terrified and affected by the sight that she fell into violent hysterics, and for many hours they feared for the result. In time she calmed down, and the effect disappeared ; but the impression remained, and was never forgotten by herself in after years.

### III.

AFTER the death of her grandfather, changes were made in the household, and it was decided that the little girl should return to her own home. She had only been lent for a time.

For her, this meant the commencement of a new life. At her grandmother's she had been made the first consideration ; had been indulged in every way ; her every wish had been studied, as much as it was possible to do so in those days of discipline ; but her sweet nature, as I have said, could not be spoilt.

She now became the companion of her father, whose cultivated mind greatly guided her from that hour, and, no doubt, had considerable influence in directing the growth of her intellect. Over and above her governess, he superintended her studies and indicated her reading ; and she ever looked up to him with the deepest reverence and affection.

I have remarked that he was a man of great mental power ; a refined and polished gentleman, as well as one of the most accomplished scholars of his day ; looked up to by all, respected by high and low, ever known as the friend and protector of the poor and suffering.

Singularly calm in the ordinary ways and walks of life, nothing roused him so much as the tyranny and oppression of those who had no power to help themselves. And it was almost a proverb in Worcester that, whoever might be present at any public meeting, however important, Mr. Price's opinion would carry the day ; and the poor—if they happened to be in question—would certainly get their rights. He was a man of few words, and spoke in the quietest tones ; but all he said was pointed by such sound sense and judgment that he was seldom known to fail in carrying his point.

It must also be remembered that we are now writing of some sixty or seventy years ago and more, when the world was very different from what it is now : and, as regards the poor, they had only the rich to trust to for their privileges.

It was with such a man that my mother's earlier life was passed : exactly the man and mind to strengthen and nourish the good seed abounding in her heart. The home was a quiet one of abundance, with more life and movement about it than had been the case in the home of her grandmother. Mr. Price was a great classical scholar, and some of the learned dignitaries of the cathedral would not infrequently consult him upon abstruse points, and accept his opinion in preference to theirs. He was intimate with many, and was, indeed, more fitted to be a dignitary himself than to be the head of a manufactory. He was an especial favourite of one of the bishops, who lamented to him on his death-bed that he had not a son in the Church whose interest he might have advanced.

He was also an accomplished musician, of which art he was passionately fond ; and his sketches in water colours were far above the average of amateur productions. Landscapes, interiors, men and women, he did all equally well ; but he could not draw an animal, with which he was as unsuccessful as was Turner with his figures. He was a great chess player, moved with extreme rapidity, and rarely lost a game. Everything he undertook, he mastered.

There is no doubt that Mrs. Henry Wood inherited much of her literary talent from her father. He read deeply, and although he never wrote, he was of an original and thorough turn of mind. Whatever he attempted was carried out with an earnestness of intention which equally characterised his daughter all through life.

She, also, was very artistic in mind, and in earlier years painted charmingly in water colours. Her subjects were chiefly flowers, and she delighted in arranging and forming her own groups.

Probably no one ever lived with greater taste for preparing flowers wherewith to decorate a table or a room ; and her drawing-rooms in France were at all times made beautiful by a profusion of exotics arranged as no one else could do them. The result in her case was almost magical. It cost her neither time nor trouble. When the flowers had been sorted and placed in vases by a servant, she would go round the rooms, and in a moment, as it were, completely

transform the whole effect, giving beauty and grace where before all had been commonplace and ordinary.

But her painting she soon put aside, and when she took up her pen, her pencil was laid down for ever.

Whilst Mrs. Henry Wood was greatly indebted to her father, there is no doubt she also owed much to her mother. Two more opposite characters than Mr. and Mrs. Price could scarcely have existed, and therefore they blended into a perfect whole.

Mr. Price, thoughtful and scholarly, rarely spoke merely for the sake of saying something. His wife was a small, very pretty woman, with dark, flashing eyes, light, graceful movements, and sparkling wit and conversation. She was as animated and talkative as her husband was the opposite.

She lived to a very advanced age, and when I was fifteen and she was eighty-one, I paid a short visit to Malvern, and as we went together about the hills, she scarcely seemed the elder of the two. To the last she possessed all the life and freshness of youth.

Our conversation naturally often turned upon my mother's works. She was very proud of her daughter and took the liveliest and most intense interest in all she wrote.

"It is my delight," she would say over and over again, "to shut myself into a sitting-room, perfectly alone, with her books. I then feel that I am in the company of a great crowd of living, breathing friends. I see them and know them as much as if they actually existed; and I feel as if they all knew me. If I were suddenly transplanted to the midst of a desert with her books, I should never be lonely or depressed."

Depressed she could never have been under any circumstances. She was then a perfect picture of an old lady, and always wore her hair in the fashion of her younger days: beautifully arranged in small curls one above another on her forehead and temples. It was very picturesque, and added distinction to a face that had always been charming. Before her marriage, she and her sister had been known as "the beautiful Miss Evanses." A generation later, my mother and her sister were universally known as "the beautiful Miss Prices." Worcester had always been famous for its beauties, but the two Miss Prices were said to excel them all.

One of her great friends was Mrs. Benson, wife of the then Master of the Temple, and one of the Canons of Worcester Cathedral; and I have in my possession an ancient copy of Milton, given to my grandmother by Mrs. Benson, and which she passed on to me as one of her greatest treasures on the occasion of the visit to Malvern to which I have just alluded. Milton was one of her favourite poets, and she never tired of the grandeur and solemnity of his themes.

## IV.

THE mention of Canon Benson brings to my mind the frequency with which I have heard my mother say how much she liked him, both as a girl and a young woman. And it was only last year that my old friend Mr. Whitefoord, the Rector of Whitton, who had also been a friend of Canon Benson's in his earlier days, gave my mother great pleasure by sending her an old and lengthy letter of the Canon's, which he had unearthed from treasures long buried. Though she had not seen his writing for so many years, she at once recognised both it and the familiar style of the writer.

I have often heard her remark that when Canon Benson was in residence, people flocked from far and near to hear him preach People of all sects and denominations ; Dissenters, and even Quakers who would not have ventured at any other time within the cathedral walls, scarcely have dared to do so. His preaching was remarkable : the quietest, calmest, most earnest that could be conceived. And it was only such calm, quiet preaching that ever impressed my mother. To ranting she could never listen. A loud voice or much action had an effect upon her nervous system and delicate organisation that she was unable to bear, and she would be almost made ill by it.

Such a voice, also, as Canon Benson's was rarely found. It was perfect harmony and music. With all its quietness, every syllable he uttered was distinctly heard by the whole congregation. On the days that he preached, long before service began, there was not standing room to be had ; and the pulpit stairs were crowded up to the very door with people, who had to come down and make way for the Canon as he ascended to his place.

I have so far mentioned him because he was a great feature in my mother's life, standing out with distinct influence upon the canvas of her early days. His name was frequently upon her lips, and to her he was ever the beau-ideal and perfection of all that a preacher and a light in the Church should be. He had one affliction : in his late life he became so deaf that he could not even hear the organ, and when reading the Commandments a sign had always to be made when the organ ceased and it was time for him to go on. It was difficult to say which was the more musical of the two : his pure, distinct voice, or the soft flute stops of the instrument.

It was amongst such people that my mother's early life was passed, and it is this atmosphere which she introduces into so many of her works. Nowhere, perhaps, is it more conspicuous than in her present story, "Lady Grace." One feels that it is taken from life ; that the people are real, and actually have an existence ; that nothing is invented except plot, situations and incidents ; and even some of the latter actually occurred. Cathedral atmosphere, cathedral people, cathedral prejudices, these were a part of her life and nature, her very being, and threw their influence over the whole tone and cast of her mind. With these she was identified. She delighted in the smallest details of

this life as much as in its broad outlines. In all matters ecclesiastical she was an authority.

## V.

THE years went on until at the age of thirteen a delicacy began to show itself. Something was wrong with the spine. No doubt in these more advanced days all might have been put right : but sixty years ago the science of medicine—which, even as it is, has made less progress than any other science—was in a very elementary condition. All was done that could be done : but it seemed certain that henceforth a life of more or less suffering and weakness was to be her lot.

And now the quiet, thoughtful girl had to become still quieter and more thoughtful. The doctors did their utmost, but it was little. Her days had to be passed on a reclining board or couch, from which she seldom moved. Reading and study, always her great pleasure and passion, now became her chief resource. Surrounded by her books she was always happy.

Her mind grew and expanded rapidly, but this was probably at the expense of the frail body. As its delicacy increased, so did the singular beauty of her face.

This beauty was something quite out of the common order. It possessed a quality that cannot be described, because it was, so to say, intangible. It was something quite apart from the mere perfection of feature, which she also possessed. Perhaps the word *ethereal* will best give the reader an idea of its character.

The face was a pure oval, of the most refined description : that perfection of form that is so rarely seen. A small, straight, very delicate and refined nose ; teeth of dazzling whiteness, entire to the day of her death ; a perfect mouth, revealing at once the sensitiveness and tender sympathy of her nature and the steadfastness of her disposition. Her eyes were unusually large, dark and flashing, with a penetrating gaze that seemed to read your inmost thoughts. One felt that everything before her had to be outspoken : for if you uttered only half your thoughts, she would certainly divine the rest.

Nothing escaped her powers of observation. She seemed to learn things by intuition, so that she often surprised one by uttering what seemed like a revelation or the disclosures of an Oracle. She herself was aware of this, and was frequently amused by the result and the astonishment created. At the same time hers were the softest and sweetest eyes imaginable, and one marvelled over and over again, how this singular combination of intellect, penetration, and sweetness could exist—as exist it undoubtedly did.

With it all, her prevailing expression was a look of absolute repose. I remember Lady Lush once saying to me—one of the best women that ever lived : whose life was devoted to good works—that she would give anything to possess my mother's calm expression. But Lady Lush's life was passed in activity, and in the bustle of the

world ; my mother's to a great extent in the retirement of her study. Her health never permitted of anything else ; and even after a quiet but animated evening with friends, she would sometimes suffer from a fit of nervous exhaustion, which would feel to her almost like death itself.

This calmness and serenity came from within. It seemed as if her whole life, with all its cares, responsibilities and joys, was taken to a higher Power and Refuge than any on earth, and there reposed in the security of perfect faith. This was, indeed, the case. She never spoke of these matters, but she was the living, breathing embodiment of the verse : "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

The head was well set upon the shoulders : a head perfect in form, small, except where the intellectual faculties were developed. Her complexion was dazzling, the most lovely bloom at all times contrasting with the brilliant whiteness of her skin. In hours of animation I have watched the delicate flush come and go a hundred times in as many minutes across her wonderful countenance ; and, to record the simile once used by a friend in speaking to me of this peculiar beauty, "chasing each other like the rosy clouds of sunrise sweeping across a summer sky." She had a very keen sense of wit and humour.

This strange beauty remained with her to the end! Even in hours of illness and suffering it never forsook her. Her face never lost its look of youth. It was absolutely without line or wrinkle or any mark or sign of age. She kept to the last the complexion and freshness of a young girl : that strange radiancy which seemed the reflection of some unseen glory. This was so great that to the last we were unable to realise that death could come to her.

I fear this may sound very like exaggeration, but many living friends will bear witness that it only falls short of the facts. I have said that these simple records would have come more appropriately from some other hand than mine ; but as mine is the task, I can only do it to the best of my ability, and with absolute truth. I cannot do less than justice to her who for so many years was unto us as a fortress firm and sure ; whose wisdom was unfailing ; whose love was boundless ; who would never at any moment have hesitated to lay down her life for those she loved, had the trial been demanded of her ; whose loss is as the withdrawing of the sun from our sky, the life and beauty of all that was to us most sacred and most dear.

The description lately given of her by an unknown writer, who yet must have met her, is as true as anything that could be written of her : " You can almost see the spirit itself of Mrs. Henry Wood shining through the frail, I had almost said diaphanous, body and exquisite face ; and the sight only rivets and charms one more and more ; for she possesses a sparkling intellect and a heart of gold."

## VI

It is said of most literary people that they are not domesticated. My mother was eminently so. Her household was perfectly ruled ; the most complete order and system reigned. Her servants were expected to do their duties without any interference. It was the rarest thing for any servant to leave her. She never omitted, morning by morning, to have an interview with her housekeeper ; when the orders were given for the day, down to the smallest item concerning luncheon or dinner. Punctuality was a strict rule of the house : everything was ready to the moment ordered. There was no effort, no jarring, no ruling except by quiet, firm influence. The complaints about domestics so often heard in these days were never heard in my mother's house, and never existed.

She was a very early riser. Punctually at seven o'clock, summer and winter, her maid went into her room, drew up the blinds, and she rose immediately after. A few minutes after eight, she went into her study, where she invariably breakfasted alone, never coming down, except upon very special occasions, until one o'clock, when her work was over for the day.

Of her benevolence, perhaps a few words may be recorded. Her charity was unbounded. It might be said of her : "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor ; yea she reacheth forth her hand to the needy." Her pensioners were many. No one ever applied to her in vain if they were found worthy. She gave away many hundreds a year, yet always with discretion. Very much was done in secret, and all was done, as all else in her life, unobtrusively. Her sympathy with suffering and sorrow was profound.

But we have not quite done with her girlhood.

From the age of thirteen to seventeen my mother's life may be said to have been spent on her reclining board and couch. No doubt this greatly tended to bend her mind in the direction it took ; just as Scott's long illness about the same age strengthened and developed all his own powers of romance. No doubt, also, it gave her that matured habit of thought and calm, sound judgment for which in after life she was distinguished. Her imagination grew with her growth and her reading, but so did her good sense. Considering the occupation of her life, and her constant exercise of the gift of ideality, the common sense she exercised on all possible occasions was as singular as it was remarkable.

At the age of seventeen the curvature of the spine became confirmed and settled. She was pronounced cured. That is to say, she ceased to suffer. Nothing more could be done. It was no longer necessary to be always reclining. In earlier life very little amiss was to be seen with the figure, except that she remained small and short, her height not exceeding five feet two. But, the spine excepted, she was so perfectly formed that her movements were at all times full of

grace and dignity. Her constitution was remarkably sound, but the body henceforth was to be frail, delicate, absolutely without muscular power. She could at no time raise an ordinary weight, or ever carry anything heavier than a small book or a parasol.

Whether this weakness of the spine had anything to do with the fall when she was thrown over the hedge by Mrs. Tipton, the house-keeper : or whether it was a certain weakness born with her, and which had to develop itself in any case : or whether the strength and activity of the brain overpowered the weaker body : this can never be known. In any case it was to be.

I think it was probably due to the latter cause, for many writers have suffered in a similar manner.

It was once said to me by one who knew all three, that if you followed Miss Mitford, Mrs. Barrett Browning, and Mrs. Henry Wood down a street, walking side by side, you could scarcely tell one from the other, so much were their figures alike.

Another, who at this moment occurs to me, was Julia Kavanagh. She has told me that in early life she suffered exactly as my mother had suffered ; but she was even smaller and shorter, and the mischief in her case was more evident. She, too, had large, beautiful brown eyes, with a singular softness and sweetness about them, through which one saw shining the spirit of purity and devotion.

There is no doubt that the cultivation of the intellect is often purchased at the expense of muscular power. The constitution may remain vigorous, but whatever is done or accomplished in life has to be done through the brain. Bodily toil or exertion becomes impossible.

With my mother the frailty of the body was so pronounced that every word of "East Lynne" was written in a reclining chair with her manuscript paper upon her knees.

#### VII.

WHEN about twenty years of age, trouble came to her home. Trouble not from within but from without. Not the overwhelming disasters that overtook many households, but sufficient to make a marked change in her life.

It was about this time that Huskisson, with the desire for "Free Trade" which has since characterised a certain number of English statesmen, opened the British ports for the introduction of foreign goods.

The immediate effect upon the English glove manufacturers was disastrous. Men of limited works and means were ruined and disappeared for ever. Those who could weather the storm did so at immense sacrifices.

Amongst these was Mr. Price. Ever thoughtful and considerate for others, and especially so for those beneath him or dependent upon him, though he employed a very large number of workpeople,

he would not discharge one of them. For long they remained absolutely idle. It was generally supposed that when the evil wrought came to be realised, the ports would be closed again. For years manufacturers went on hoping against hope. In this and other ways for many weeks, week after week, and week by week, Mr. Price lost each week what to many would have been a large fortune.

Matters were growing serious. Thousands of working men and women were thrown out of work; thousands were starving. Huskisson saw the mistake he had made when it was too late. The mischief was done; the evil had fallen. Ruined masters could not be reinstated: the thousands of operatives had scattered over the land: or had found other occupation: or had died of want and despair.

Mr. Price felt the blow equally with others, but, thanks to private resources, he was by no means ruined. Had he retired at once, he might have done so with wealth and honour. Probably, he too thought that when those who had done this mischief saw the evil they had brought upon the land, they would do their best to correct it. It is in human nature to go on hoping against hope. It was a very forlorn hope in this instance. The Bill had passed, the deed was done. The evil came to the few, as was predicted by the very men who wrought it; but it came to the many also; whilst the benefits that were to follow to the millions were never traced.

Chiefly for his workpeople Mr. Price had kept on. He saw misery and ruin, distress and famine around him; as far as he was able, his own people should be spared. But he paid a great price for all this upright dealing and noble conduct. Though even now it was not absolutely necessary, yet he thought it right to diminish his household and his expenditure, and to continue life in a much simpler manner than that to which he had been born and bred.

Probably very few living remember the devastation and ruin worked at this time in many of the manufacturing towns of England. But, as in "Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles," Mrs. Henry Wood has given a detailed description of the manufactories, their ways, and works; so in "Mildred Arkell," and especially in the chapter headed *A City's Desolation*, she has recorded the misery and despair that fell upon so many parts of England on this opening of the British ports.

The wealth Mr. Price then lost he never recovered. All had not gone. He was fortunately a man of sufficient property, and enjoyed an easy competence to the last; but this was all very different from what it once had been.

### VIII.

THE next change in my mother's life was her marriage with Mr. Henry Wood, who was at the head of a large shipping and banking firm abroad. He was also for some time in the consular service, and it was said by Lord Palmerston in his later days that he had

never, in all his experience, received such clear and satisfactory documents and reports as those invariably sent in by Mr. Henry Wood. He retired early into private life, and died, comparatively speaking, a young man.

It was a singular coincidence that he was somewhat nearly related to one who bore his name, and was for many years Canon of Worcester Cathedral, and who died only last year full of age and honour.

Another coincidence was, that in marrying Miss Price he was marrying into an old family name, though they were in no way related. He was heir to a considerable property left to the family by an ancestor named Price, who in 1741 went out as Governor of Surat. He died in 1780, leaving property, which, unclaimed by his family, remained in the hands of the East India Company until it passed over to the Government. There it still remains, to enable my father's descendants to indulge in Aladdin-like visions of wealth and airy castles, from which perhaps they derive as much pleasure as if they possessed them in reality.

My father, though a man of great intellectual power, possessed a very different cast of mind from that of his wife. He was almost devoid of imagination. Novels he scarcely ever read; poetry he would not look at; but abstruse books of science were his delight. Yet in social life he was the gayest of the gay.

He had a great gift for languages, and those he had mastered he spoke fluently. No Frenchman hearing him speak French for the first time would believe that he was English. This, in the most delicate and therefore difficult of European tongues, was a great test. To his children it came naturally, as their mother tongue; with him it was acquired, and therefore the greater merit. He was a first-rate public speaker, and a great politician on the Conservative side.

He possessed another gift also—that of Medicine; loving it for its own sake. Out of pure admiration for the work and science, he walked the hospitals of London, performed operations, went through the whole curriculum. And this not with any idea of practising—he never did practise, and never intended to do so—but from absolute devotion to the art. He was a great friend of the late Sir William Lawrence; who, indeed, in the only illness he was ever known to have until his last and fatal illness, saved his life. He had the strength of a man with the tenderness of a woman.

I have said that he never practised, but I ought to make one exception. As long as he lived, we never needed a doctor, never had one. He was all-sufficient; and through all the illnesses to which childhood is heir, he brought us to safe and speedy convalescence. This was twice fortunate for us, who were living abroad, and must otherwise have been at the mercy of foreign physicians. These as often kill as cure. It is only the French surgeons who excel in skill.

It was, indeed, the fatal treatment of a French doctor which determined him to take matters henceforth into his own hands.

At that time two children had been born to him : his eldest son, Henry, named after himself, and a daughter, Ellen, named after her mother. The little girl was seized with scarlet fever, and my father, then a young man, feared to take so much responsibility upon himself. He was devoted to his children, but especially so to his little daughter. I have heard her described as a very sweet child, and people frequently said she was too good to live. Their prophecies proved only too true.

The doctors treated her as they always treated the malady in those days. They first of all starved her, and when she was sinking from exhaustion applied leeches to the throat. The faithful nurse, who was then a member of the household, has ever since belonged to us, and been looked upon as a firm friend of the family, protested in vain.

"Monsieur," she cried to her master, distractedly raising her hands in agonies of despair, "do not allow it. If this thing is done and the leeches are applied, I tell you the child will die."

They were applied ; the little throat closed up, and the child died. For long the sorrow of the father was such, it was feared that he would die also. The faithful nurse was almost equally affected. She was one of those strong and determined characters who will have their own way in everything ; the under nurses had to obey her every look, and even the mother's authority in her nursery was not absolute.

She was as tenacious in her affections as she was strong in character. None but herself was allowed to perform the last sad offices for the pure and beautiful little creature who had gone to a better world. With her own hands she placed her in her little coffin, watched over it night and day, until the little body was consigned to the earth, and hidden away for ever from mortal eyes.

But my father had had enough of French doctors. The day his little girl died, his son was taken ill with the fever. "This," he said, sadly, "shall now be my care ; come what may I will have no more French doctors in the house." And in a fortnight the little fellow was well again and running about.

Years afterwards, when another little daughter was born to them, my father—who regarded his wife as a woman far above rubies ; and who thought to the end of his life the world contained none like her—again insisted that the name Ellen should be repeated.

His wife, whose vivid imagination perhaps inclined her to be slightly superstitious, hesitated : a compromise was eventually agreed upon by the addition of the name of Mary : and Ellen Mary she was accordingly christened. Had he been blessed with twelve daughters instead of two, I believe that every one of them, amongst other names, would have borne that of Ellen.

The name exactly suited my mother : soft, liquid, flowing easily.

It expressed her own gentle, quiet nature. So much gentle softness was perhaps never before united to so much vigour of mind.

Amongst the many charms that characterised her was a very rare one. She had little ear for music, no voice whatever for singing ; but in speaking her voice was music itself. Sweet and low, clear and distinct, it was like a silver bell in the house, like the softest flute. Those who heard it once, never forgot it. By reason of its beauty, it rang in your ears long after you had passed out of her presence. It rings in mine as I write, where it will ring for ever. No music in heaven will be sweeter : no face will be fairer.

"The sound of a voice that is still," can scarcely be applied in this instance. Her voice and her presence do not seem to be withdrawn. It is impossible to pass her room and believe that she is no longer there. Such presence and influence as hers do not cease with death. It was sufficient if she were only in the house : a subtle, impalpable something told you that it was so, even though unseen : and it was light and life to those about her. With her amongst us we were lifted at once far above the ordinary conditions of everyday existence.

#### IX.

AFTER her marriage, Mrs. Henry Wood went abroad, and England for many years ceased to be her home. It was a great change of life and atmosphere for the young girl, who, until now, had known only the quiet and retirement of a Cathedral city, had consorted with its grave clergy : years of which life, moreover, had been passed on a reclining board and a couch, from which she was seldom permitted to stir.

At first, I have heard her say, she did not like the change, though she went to a beautiful home, and was surrounded by all that wealth could supply or affection dictate. But her mind was unusually faithful to old impressions, singularly tenacious, and many elements dear to her in the old life were wanting in the new.

She mixed in a different social atmosphere. The gravity and dignity of a cathedral city were exchanged for the gaiety and sparkle that distinguish so many French towns. The language, too, was foreign. Though she had studied French, she could not speak it. In time she came to do so as fluently as English, but that was only in after years.

The cathedral itself was a very great loss to her. She missed the beautiful services ; the quiet dignity and solemnity with which everything was done there ; the chanting of the prayers, the influence of the building itself, and the beauty of the great east window, so often alluded to in her works.

To the end she delighted in rich colours, and it was ever her pleasure to blend them about her in her sitting-rooms. For hours she would sit in her drawing-room watching the prismatic reflections thrown from a crystal upon an opposite wall, whilst plots and ideas for her works would flash through her brain with strange ease and fertility.

But as time went on she grew reconciled to the change, and in the end very much liked her Continental life, and looked back upon it as upon very happy days.

She had another great source of pleasure. She always slept well, but she dreamed constantly, and it was ever the greatest delight to her to recall her dreams. The remembrance of them did not pass away, as they do with most people. She would dream whole consecutive histories ; she was ever wandering in the loveliest realms, amongst the sweetest flowers. These dreams never forsook her throughout life. In her very last days when waking out of sleep, she would say to those about her how beautiful her dreams had been.

No wonder. Her imagination was continually exercised. Her spirit was pure and lovely above any we ever knew ; her face was the reflection of every beauty and every virtue ; her waking thoughts were ever full of compassion and consideration for others. An unkindly thought never entered her heart ; an unkindly or uncharitable word was never heard upon her lips.

Whilst very rarely giving expression to her emotions—she was, indeed, in these matters, singularly reticent and self-contained—love and compassion were the key-notes of her life. It is a fact that she was never known to make an enemy. Every one who knew her agreed in loving and praising her. It could not have been otherwise. Her very sweetness disarmed all antagonism. The weaknesses of her sex seemed to have passed her by. Faithful friend, charming and intellectual companion, she yet never for a moment indulged in frivolous chatter and gossip ; and such was her unconscious influence that scandal was never mentioned before her.

There was of course one great reason for all this personal influence and beauty of living. She was, in a quiet, unostentatious way, one of the most religious and devout women that ever lived. She had a firm, unwavering faith. Her heart at all times seemed fixed upon the things unseen rather than upon the things of earth. Her whole life was one long, silent sermon, one unbroken example of the strength and truth of religion. Her unspoken text in life was : "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." She absolutely lived up to it. And in response came the promise ever fulfilled in her case : "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

But it was all done in the most unobtrusive manner ; not with the desire of reading a lesson to others, or of being a pattern. Nothing was ever farther from her mind. It was part of her nature ; it was herself. She had one model before her ; one Master to serve ; and she ever looked upwards.

Only in this manner can such a life as hers be lived. Otherwise, all the disturbing elements of earth would inevitably come in and trouble the harmony of the whole, and constant failure would be the result. Human nature is at best imperfect ; but as far as it was possible, hers was a perfect life.

It was all lived in the quietest, calmest, most gentle manner. I have said that she never preached to others. Religion was never mentioned by her. It was far too sacred a thing to be made a topic of conversation. On rare occasions, when it became her absolute duty to speak, her words were few, but impressive with the rare power of earnestness and conviction. She never wearied even her children with lengthened sittings and difficult tasks : but she never omitted to have them with her morning after morning ; and if the beautiful face and voice, and the earnest tone and manner, failed in their mission, it must be that there could be no power in any earthly influence.

It seems to me right to insist upon this, the highest and best of all her gifts, because it has been too often the case that where great powers of the imagination have existed, the higher spiritual gifts have been absent from their possessors.

It was also the unobtrusiveness of my mother's spiritual life that gave it so much power. She persuaded and conquered by the force of example alone. She was followed, yet she never commanded or dictated.

Her unswerving faith never failed her to the last. It was not likely to do so. She bore many weeks of great suffering without a murmur, never losing her serenity, her brightness ; that calm, trusting glance, which ever spoke of a Peace not of this world ; and she saw the last dread hour approaching with a heroism that cannot be told, a full, firm faith and reliance upon Him in whom she had trusted. Whilst those about her, and near and dear to her, had sometimes to hasten from the room to conceal the emotion it was not always possible to control, her eye remained undimmed, her calmness never forsook her.

#### X.

To go back for a moment to the earlier days of her married life.

I have said that the change from a cathedral city to a Continental town was a great one. Many old influences dear to her disappeared for ever. Above all, the companionship of her father, his cultivated mind and constant influence. They had been everything to each other. The *Times*, in reviewing "East Lynne," said they had never yet met with any female author possessing her exceptional power for depicting *men*, especially *noble* men ; and there is no doubt the great model she frequently set before her was the father with whom her most impressionable years had been passed.

One other man had great influence upon her life : Dr. Murray, who was then Dean of Worcester and at the same time Bishop of Rochester. He was perhaps the handsomest and most dignified man who ever wore bishop's robes, and he was dignified and influential in all his domestic relations.

From all this she was transferred to France, with its blue skies and balmy atmosphere. But the climate did not always suit her.

Her delicate frame could never bear great heat, which affected her nervous system in a very peculiar manner.

Depression of mind was unknown to her : but in the extreme heat of summer, she could only sit or recline, clad in thin gauze or muslin, and there was ever upon her a weight of some great impending evil or calamity. Had it been her fate to go out to such a climate as that of India, for instance, there is no doubt that she would soon have died.

Once, in the South of France, she was nearly overtaken by a great misfortune.

She was much tormented by gnats, and these troublesome insects, one summer, so affected her left hand, that fears were entertained for the result. A consultation of surgeons ended in a divided opinion as to the necessity for taking the hand off, and for some time it seemed that she must lose it. One of the doctors, however, held out, and in the end it was saved, and she perfectly recovered. She had the most perfect hands and arms almost ever seen : the whitest, most delicate, most fragile, and most beautiful.

In her married life, my mother, like everyone else in this world, had many troubles and trials. Some of them, indeed, were singularly great and overwhelming : and it may be said that her character was made perfect through suffering.

My father, an intellectual and talented man, might have risen to any distinction in the world, and ought to have died the possessor of great wealth. His income at the time of his marriage, numbered many thousands a year. Everyone fell under the charm of his manner and conversation. In every assembly he was the leading spirit. But he had one fault. He wanted the solidity of character and earnest steadfastness of purpose which so eminently distinguished his wife.

Up to the time of his retirement he had been a man of the rarest activity and energy. He was ever ready to do everything for everyone, but, alas, seldom thought of himself. One or two of the great railways in France owed their final consolidation to his wonderful financial and organising powers, and his singular conviction of success in all he undertook. He possessed a temperament sanguine to a fault, but it sometimes enabled him to triumph where others would have failed.

Whilst my mother was a great reader of countenance, my father was absolutely devoid of the faculty. He believed in everyone. The simplest tale would impose upon him. He was generous to recklessness, and whether a friend came to him to borrow twenty pounds or two thousand, it is simply a fact that he had only to ask and to have the larger sum just as readily as the smaller.

The consequence was that no one was so popular, and no one's goodness was so much abused.

This is rather a fatal gift for going through life, and my father's

wealth rapidly diminished. Before very many years were over he saw that, in spite of his undoubted powers, he was really unfit for active life ; he retired, and, in 1866, died, comparatively speaking, a young man.

Shortly before this they had returned to England. For some years my mother had taken up her pen, and, month after month, had contributed stories to *Bentley's Miscellany*, and *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*. These magazines were then the property of William Harrison Ainsworth. My mother's stories appeared anonymously, but attracted much attention ; and there is no doubt that they, in conjunction with the charming and admirable essays of William Francis Ainsworth, kept the magazines from extinction—a fate, I believe, they eventually suffered.

One anecdote may here be given in reference to these stories. My father and mother had come over to England for a short visit, and were staying at a private hotel in Dover Street, Piccadilly, where they happened to make the acquaintance of some charming people—a lady and gentleman who were staying there at the same time.

At this period my mother was writing a series of letters supposed to be written by a young officer out in the Crimea. They were called "Ensign Tom Pepper's Letters from the Seat of War."

One morning the lady in question mentioned to my mother that her husband had gone out for a magazine. "He is deeply interested in some letters that are appearing in *Colburn's New Monthly*," she said, "and can scarcely wait patiently from one month to another. *We are both certain they are genuine,*" she added, emphatically.

My mother, who seldom spoke of her writing to her most intimate friends, and never at all to strangers, could not help laughing at the singular situation ; and great was their astonishment at finding that the author of those masculine and realistic letters was none other than the calm, gentle, refined lady whose acquaintance they had so recently made.

#### XI.

BUT my pen has carried me beyond its limits, and I cannot here enter upon my mother's new life, which began with her literary career. This must be reserved for another paper, and for next month.

I have very rapidly sketched some of the events of her earlier life. Later on, and not for these pages, the picture may be filled in more elaborately.

It is certain that the beauty of her life ought to be known, and could never be too widely circulated. Faithfully depicted, it could only have a lasting influence for good upon everyone who read it ; for the faithful record of one good life is above the power of all the sermons that ever were written.

It may seem that I have exaggerated her charms and virtues ;

have made her too perfect a character. It is, indeed, difficult to write calmly and dispassionately about her. I repeat, again, how much I feel that the task should have been placed in other hands, had they existed. But they do not exist. I have nothing but praise to record ; nothing else was possible in all the days of her life. I can only appeal to the "great cloud of witnesses" who knew her to bear me testimony that I have stayed my hand where I might have said much more.

I have letters by me from great men, who declare that her influence upon them will follow them through life, and I feel that they have uttered no exaggeration ; no mere form of words.

A few weeks before the end, she was, and had been for long, in better health than usual. It has been stated that she was crippled with infirmities. Nothing could be more incorrect. She had scarcely left the house for two years, but she had kept perfectly well at home, bright and quietly animated as ever. She felt that she was growing weaker, and would sometimes say so, but there was no difference in her to reveal the hidden mischief.

It was the curvature of the spine, dating back sixty years, that was to prove fatal now. This for two years had been getting worse, though none knew it. It was an *inward* curvature ; and as it increased, it pressed upon the heart, and gradually prevented it from exercising its functions.

On Christmas Day, 1886, she caught cold, and came down for the last time. No one dreamed of a fatal termination to her illness. But from that day until the end—February 10th—she suffered the intense agony of inability to breathe, and ever-growing weakness and weariness. This arose from the heart pressure.

It was only at the beginning of February that those around her became seriously alarmed ; and even then a consultation of doctors led to the hope that her life might still be spared.

It was not to be. On the 10th of February, 1887, at about half-past three in the morning, with her hand in that of the writer she passed away : so gently, that none knew the exact moment when the summons came.

Such is the loss to those who are left. If the whole universe were laid at their feet, it could in nothing fill the void created by a sorrow never to pass away, a silence never to be broken. For her, it may indeed be said with Jacob, "They will go down mourning to the grave ;" but that she was, and for what she was, they can only sing an everlasting song of thanksgiving. The 31st chapter of Proverbs in its description of a good woman is true to her throughout : and in Solomon's words—and I would that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever—"HER CHILDREN ARISE UP, AND CALL HER BLESSED."

CHARLES W. WOOD.

## MARIONETTES.

**I**T is venti-quattro, the hour of sunset, and through the town the bells are ringing out, one after the other, a clash of sweet sounds.

In the west the sun has sunk below the horizon, but the afterglow remains—a gorgeous sight. The whole of the sky is painted in deepest gold, shading off above into the blue of an Italian sky. Against such a background the cypresses stand out dark, and the tower and roofs of the houses on yonder hill are well defined.

It is late in November, in the year 188—, and already the days are beginning to shorten. Along the streets, and by the river which runs through the town, carriages are hurrying. There is a little crowd at the corner to watch them as they pass, and to admire the brilliant toilettes of the fair occupants. Behind it all, leaning against the wall, is the slender figure of a young man. To look at him is to feel certain at once that he belongs to the very poor. His hat is slouched over his eyes, but the face looks pale, with good features ; his dress is very shabby, and his attitude is one of listless weariness.

He moves at last, and, turning to the left, passes into a back street.

Here it is almost dark. The lovely afterglow does not penetrate into these narrow streets ; only a strip of blue sky is to be seen above, with a few stars twinkling. On he goes ; up one street, down another, half across the big town, until he comes to a little open path. There is a sound of music, a noisy drum being played with intense vigour, and a pipe rather out of tune, but still effective. There is a structure which looks quite imposing by this uncertain light, though by daylight it is shabby enough ; and on the front is a large placard, proclaiming that inside are to be seen the famous Marionettes. As the figure approaches, a little boy runs out from between some curtains at the back.

“Why, Mimi, what is it ?” says the man, stopping.

“Babbo, come, come,” shouts the little fellow ; “there are ten people inside. Three grandi signori in the best places, and mamma has dressed the Queen of Sheba in her new dress. She is beautiful in white, with a real gilt paper crown. We are waiting for you, and then we will have macaroni for supper.”

It is late at night, the performance is over, the poor little theatre is in darkness, and the Marionettes are all safely put to bed in a great big trunk. And now in the little room at the back there is joy and content, for on the table stands a steaming dish of macaroni, flanked by a flask of thin red Tuscan wine. Round the table are gathered the little family.

The mother, who looks very young, with dark eyes and fair hair; in her arms is a baby, who sits up and crows, and gazes in rapture at the lamp before it. Mimi is intent on the macaroni, and until the delightful moment comes for enjoying it, is munching away at a hard crust.

Luigi, the father, has taken off his hat, and looks brighter now than when we first saw him on the bridge. It is a fine, intellectual-looking head, but there are lines of care traced on the forehead, and there is a certain weakness about it, which speaks of a nature not exactly suited to push to the front, in the scramble which we call life. But this evening all anxiety is put away, as money enough has been taken to provide this little family with the necessities of life for at least three or four days to come, and there is hope also for the future.

Christmas will soon be here, and holiday-making people cannot find a better way of amusing themselves for a few pence than in going to see the famous Marionettes. The town is full of strangers, some of whom may condescend also to enter this humble little booth, and admire the Queen of Sheba, and the graceful attitudes of Mademoiselle Rosalie, the dancer, who flies round on one toe, and, finally, springs almost to the top of the stage, to sink afterwards on one knee, and hold out her hands to the audience for applause.

## II.

HIGH among the Apennines there is a little village, hidden away in the mountains. It consists of a few houses, some of them very old and small, yet with a certain air of picturesqueness about them, surrounded as they are by the giant mountains, and overshadowed by immense chestnut trees. Above the village stands the little church.

Here it was that, twenty-four years ago, a little dark-eyed, ragged boy, named Luigi Pasterini used to run about, and play the livelong day.

He belonged to a very old woman, who lived in one of the poorest and smallest of the houses, and managed to eke out a scanty living for herself and her grandchild. And because she was known to be so old, and so very, very poor, Luigi became, in a way, the child of the whole "paese." Often a piece of cake, or some nuts or figs were thrust into his little brown hands, in those days, by the kind mothers who had children of their own.

So Luigi grew and thrrove, nourished by the sun and the sweet air of the mountains, and by the great love the old "nonna" gave him without stint, because she had so little else to give him.

Time went on, and he went to the little school, and learnt all that the old man who kept it could teach him. And then just as he began to wish to leave his home high up among the hills and learn a little what life in the plains was like, the old "nonna" died. It was his

first great sorrow; and though by this time he had grown straight and tall, and considered himself quite a man; yet the day they buried her, and he went back alone to the empty cottage, and there was no one to see, he knelt beside the chair in which she had always sat, and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed as if his heart would break.

The next morning came friends with advice and help.

One of the principal "contadini" had a brother who kept a shop at Bologna. He was well off already, and was making money fast. He wanted a youth to help him keep the accounts, and Luigi could now write a fair hand, and was clever at figures. It would be just what he most desired to get; an honest lad, from his own old "paese." So Luigi was started off for Bologna, with a letter of introduction to the shopkeeper, and a few francs in his pocket: a little sum made up from pence collected by a kind neighbour from the very poor, who are always the most generous.

He said "Good-bye" to all his friends, and to the dear "nonna's" grave, and then started, in the most tidy clothes he possessed, with his few belongings tied up in a handkerchief, for the great world.

The shopkeeper received him kindly. He was pleased with the lad's open face and modest manners, and his heart warmed to one who came from his own country.

The shop was a "cartoleria," and Luigi soon learnt to sell paper and envelopes, and to know exactly the sort of pens or pencils wanted by the different customers. He kept the accounts, too, in a beautiful manner. His master had found a treasure; and as he was a lone man, without wife, or child, or sister, Luigi seemed on the high road to fortune, but for a certain event which took place about five years after he entered the shop.

It was "Il giorno dei morti," always a festival kept most sacred by the Italians, and especially dear to Luigi, who paid for many a mass, out of his small earnings, for the dear "nonna" who had been so good to him, and who still represented to him all he had ever had to love in the world. For his master, though kind and just, was too dignified and severe to inspire such a feeling.

To-day Luigi had been engaged in the shop since the very early morning. He had not been able, as his habit was, to run out for the early mass. So it was almost midday when he started and crossed the square to enter the great cathedral-like church of St. Patronio. At the door were two old men, clothed in bright scarlet cloth cloaks and hoods, seated on chairs, ready to receive the alms of the charitable—and who could refuse a soldo on such a day to the blind and feeble and old? Even Luigi drops his little bit of two centimes into the old man's hand and enters.

As he pushes back the great heavy door, he stops, awe-struck, at the burst of exquisite melody which greets him. There is an orchestra of many instruments—violins, violoncellos, horns—and the music seems just now as if it were the song of the blessed, no

longer dead, but living triumphant. Yes, why weep any longer over the sad graves in yonder Campo Santo? This is the sweet song of gratitude, poured out by happy rescued souls at the feet of the Saviour.

Near him, kneeling, with her face upturned and her large soft eyes full of tears, is a young girl.

She is dressed in black, but the little simple dress, made to fit the pretty figure, is of perfect neatness, and the soft hair shades the round, childish face. Luigi looks again and again, and almost forgets to kneel and join in the service, his soul is so full of pity for that sorrowful face. Presently he falls on his knees behind her, and tries hard to forget everything but his devotions.

The service over, he waits until the girl moves. He must and will know who she is, so he drops still farther behind. When she leaves the church, he follows her, most cunningly keeping on the other side of the road.

She does not go far. Across the piazza, and a little way down a street, until she comes to an old arch, through which she passes, and stops before a little shop. No, this it can scarcely be called, for in the windows there is nothing to tempt the passer-by. The door is open, and inside is a humble little room; whitewashed walls and a common chair and table, before which sits an old man, with a bottle of ink and a great bundle of pens, while over the wall is painted the word, "Scrivano."

The girl passes in out of sight, and the door closes.

Luigi hovers about, determined not to leave until he is quite sure that there is nothing more to be learned: and he is rewarded.

At the end of half an hour she comes out with a letter in her hand; and then, when Luigi has watched her quite out of sight, he enters. He knows the old man, who sits there all day to write letters, and it is not difficult to learn from him what he is most anxious to know. Yes, he knows the girl; and a pretty girl she is, and a good little thing, too; but he fears that she has had a sad sort of life of it with that cross old uncle. Why, does not Gigi know him? Old Piero Vanni, to whom the Marionettes belong? Very good Marionettes they are, too, and well do they merit a visit. He advises him to go and see them, and then, perhaps, he may catch a glimpse of pretty Chiara as well.

Needless to say that the first spare evening, Luigi started off to see the show; and many a time afterwards he was to be found there, until at last, one happy evening, he managed to speak to Chiara. He had made the acquaintance of the uncle some weeks before, and had found him all that had been described—old and cross and disagreeable, but clever with his Marionettes.

After this, the little romance progressed without let or hindrance. For once the course of true love did run smoothly.

There was no one to object to the young people doing exactly as

they liked, except the old uncle, and he was rather proud that his little Chiara should be sought by a young man of whom all the neighbours spoke so well. Besides—and this was a great point with the old man—Luigi was clever, and he himself was old and feeble now, and might die any day. Then he had nothing in the world to leave his little Chiara but his Marionettes; and what could Chiara do with Marionettes? She could not work them. But Gigi might learn, and do even better in the future than he had done.

So, when, as time went on, and Luigi had won Chiara: had been allowed to take the little hand he loved and hold it in both his own, and kiss the sweet eyes which had won him that day in the Cathedral: it came to be a question of ways and means between himself and Piero. Then that old man made it a condition, that if he married Chiara, he should give up the situation in which he was then, and become owner and manager of the Marionettes.

Luigi was far too much in love to hesitate at any condition. Besides the life seemed to him to have many charms, and held out the hope of much for the future.

So there was a modest wedding in one of the small churches of Bologna, one morning in early spring. And among the few guests present was Luigi's former master. Though he sorely regretted losing the young man, and had quite made up his mind that he was ruining himself by the step he was taking, yet when the time came, he honoured the ceremony with his presence. And more than this: the evening before, he had added quite a handsome sum to the amount due to Luigi; so that altogether, as he had been a careful lad and had saved something, the young people started with what seemed to them riches.

Luigi took his young wife up into the mountains to his own "paese." All who had known him as a boy welcomed him back, and made much of Chiara; and she responded to the simple kindness of the women and children, who were won by her pretty ways as much as all the men were by her pretty face. The month they spent among the hills was for ever after the brightest bit of their lives. Then they returned to Bologna, and Luigi settled down to help Piero in the management of the Marionettes.

A year afterwards, Mimi was born to them, and he became at once the old man's delight and pride. But Piero was growing very feeble and broken now, and the winters are cold and long at Bologna; so when Mimi was two years old, the little family agreed to move to Florence. This journey nearly swallowed up all Luigi's savings, much of which had gone in an illness Chiara had after Mimi's birth, which left her delicate for nearly a year.

Very soon after they were settled at Florence poor old Piero died. This was a grief to them both, and carried off the rest of Luigi's little hoard. Then a baby girl was born to Chiara, and Fortune lately had not been kind to the young couple. Poverty had come to

them, and ill-health and sorrow, and it was with a sad heart that Luigi stood that evening at the corner of the bridge.

## III.

THE ten people whose arrival Mimi so joyfully announced to his father seemed, for the time, to be the turning-point of their fortune.

The holiday season was setting in, Christmas was near, and day after day found the little booth fairly filled. Then, after it was all over, and the children were safely in bed, Luigi used to wrap his long cloak round him and, indulging in the luxury of a cheap cigar, would stroll off among the narrow streets of Florence.

The deep repose of the night was of all things most refreshing to him : the darkness only relieved by the quiet light of the moon, which looked down between the two dark lines made by the roofs of the houses on each side of the narrow street. Here and there a light gleamed from a house, where, looking in at the window, you might see the cobbler still working away by the light of a lamp, or the worker in copper hammering at pots and pans.

He avoided the principal streets, full of shops, which were even at that hour of the night brilliantly lighted. Crossing the bridge where the river flowed, its course marked out by dots of brightest light—for so the gas lamps look from a distance—he would go on, choosing always the least used streets. Now and again there would meet him as he passed a rich, full voice singing. Far away one heard it, and then nearer and nearer it came, each note dropping full and round on the still night air. A figure crosses the patch of bright moonlight which falls here upon the pavement. It is a young fellow who looks as if he, too, had been working hard all day and was now hurrying home to rest.

“Addio, mia bella. Addio.”

“L’armata, se ne va.”

No one turns aside as he passes, or even glances in his direction. The gift of song is the glorious heritage of the Italian people. It is as natural to them to sing as it is to speak. But take these wild song birds and shut them up, and teach them scales and exercises, and most likely you will find the lovely, flexible voice all gone before the first difficulties are overcome.

Other music also filled these dark streets at times : the sound of mandolins, two or three together, with the accompaniment of a guitar, a few sweet chords struck together, or some popular air played by all.

As Christmas drew near and the Novena began, these walks at night were shortened : for Luigi was an earnest Roman Catholic, and was up almost with the dawn to find time for the service soon after seven at the Church of the Trinità.

Each church in Florence, during these days, is crowded in the early morning with the poor workers ; the rough men and humble women,

to whom an hour spent in devotions means so many centimes less, and who can therefore fulfil this "obbligo" only by extra exertions, by rising earlier or sitting up later. Ah, what a difference there is between the ample leisure of the rich, and their careless prayers, and the hurried, hard-worked lives of the poor!

Christmas came, and the family were by this time almost rich. The biggest and fattest of fowls that could be bought for money, was theirs for the Christmas dinner. For Chiara, Luigi had bought some dark blue woollen material, soft and warm; for Mimi there was a little horse in sugar, for which he had been longing for months. There was content and peace in that little household.

The New Year arrived, and everything went on for a time as before. But when spring began, with hot sunshine and cold winds, Mimi fell ill. He could no longer play about, but lay in a corner listless, with hot little hands and heavy eyes.

They nursed him with tender care, and at last carried him to a chemist's near, where a doctor called twice a week, to see all the poor patients who came. He said the child was weak, must have good wine and food. There was a little fever, but it would be nothing if he was cared for. But the days lengthened into weeks, and still Mimi was not well.

And now the time had come when all the strangers leave Florence; spring was passing into summer. The hot weather came suddenly. At the end of May the city was empty. June set in with cloudless skies, and bright sunshine, but Mimi grew no stronger, and nightly it seemed that the audience at the Marionettes became smaller and smaller. Something must be done.

Luigi spent three hours printing in large letters, two inches long, an immense placard announcing that on the following Thursday there would be given, besides the ordinary performance, an original ballet with a dancer who would execute some steps the like of which had never been seen on any stage in Italy.

This placard was put up at the door of the little theatre, and then Luigi spent many an hour in practising with Mademoiselle Rosalie.

She stood on one toe, and advanced on this toe alone to the front of the stage; she threw her arms into the most lovely attitudes; in fact, she did all that a dancer could possibly accomplish. She was, at the end of five days, *enchanting*. Then a new frock was got for her. A skirt of faintest blue, over it clouds of white, caught up here and there with rosebuds. Chiara's clever fingers made it, as well as the little wreath of rosebuds which adorned her head.

The day came. Mimi had been fretful all the night before, and when morning broke, fell into a heavy dose.

It was a blazing day, the 12th of June. There was much to do, as Luigi had dispensed with all assistance that could possibly be done without. At last everything was in order, and Chiara, pale, tired, and very fragile looking, stood at the door to take the money. Would

anyone come? Alas, alas! The hour came, there was quite a little crowd of ragged boys and men at the entrance, who had none of them a soldo in their pockets. Then two or three people came, and took the cheapest seats. Again they waited, unwilling to begin. An old man strayed in with two pretty girls. Is this all? They will wait five minutes more, and meanwhile, the man who beats the big drum at the door, redoubles his efforts. In vain. No one else appears.

How long that weary evening lasted, Chiara never could tell. When at last it was over, and Luigi was able to leave his post, he found her lying face downwards on the ground, worn out with fatigue and anxiety. The disappointment had proved too much for her.

Tenderly he raised her, and carried her into the poor little room at the back, where she lay on the bed, looking like a broken lily, the small face so white. With trembling hands he felt for her heart. Yes, it beats very faintly; she was not dead. But it was a long, long time before the heavy eyes opened, and when they did, they looked at him with a wide open stare, and with no recognition in them. Before morning a bright spot of crimson burnt in each cheek, and the little hands went straying about over the bed, as hot as fire. Chiara was in a high fever.

And now began a time of agony for Luigi. All day long his darling lay there, tossing to and fro, sometimes moaning, but never knowing who it was that put the cool rags on her forehead, or moistened the dry lips.

Poor little Mimi lay still and patient in his corner, and only the baby crawled about, and crowed, all unconscious of the misery around her. At night an old woman, who had known them all, and whose work was finished at sunset, came to sit in the room while Luigi managed the Marionettes; for if these ceased to perform, what was before them but starvation? And yet nightly the gains were so few—a handful of soldi, and no more. The doctor had come, and had again repeated his directions that Mimi was to have everything nourishing; while for Chiara, he shook his head, ordered ice on her head, wrote a long prescription, and begged that there might be some very strong soup always ready, so that, as soon as the fever abated, she might be induced to take a few spoonfuls of it.

IV.

IT is July. The great heat of an Italian summer has fairly set in. The sun pours down in fierce, blinding rays all day long. From early dawn, until the sun has sunk below the horizon, it is scorchingly hot.

Just now, at midday, not a creature is to be seen in the great wide piazza, which looks like a blazing furnace; no shade anywhere; only the bright blue heavens above, and the broad white stones below reflecting the heat. Not even a dog to be seen.

On one side of the piazza is a large building, the windows of

which have all jalousies before them, now tightly closed. Inside, in a large bare looking studio, there is comparative coolness. A sort of twilight reigns. One makes out, after a moment's consideration, leaning against the wall, some large half-finished pictures. Close to one of the windows is an easel, and on it a canvas with roses—white, yellow, pink, and dark red—exquisitely painted. Looking at it stands the artist; while, leaning against the corner of the wall, is a young man with a cigar in his mouth. He takes it from between his lips, and turns to speak.

"Very well, mio Caro, you are as obstinate as a mule, and if you will have it so, nothing can move you. For my part, I tell you again, those roses are magnificent; but there is not enough repose in your picture this time. Too much incident—but listen. What is that; surely no visitor would come at this hour?"

There is a faint sound, a tinkle of a bell, then some slow, dragging steps up the wooden stairs—one, two, three, four—they stop, and there is a feeble knock.

The artist goes forward and opens the door. Upon the threshold stands a man, say rather a spectre, as he stands there in the half light. His large eyes, gleaming out of the pale, thin face, are made all the brighter by the deep blue lines round them. His figure is emaciated, his thin hands look almost like the hands of a skeleton, while great drops of weakness stand on his forehead.

A pitiful figure; and both the men gaze at it with curiosity and compassion.

He comes forward and speaks.

"Ah, Signori, for the love of Heaven, help me. My wife, my little Chiara, is dying, and I have nothing to give her. For days and days she has been lying in a fever. Have pity, and help my wife and my little ones, for we are starving. Oh, Signori, as you hope for Heaven yourselves, turn not away from my despair."

He stopped, fixing his eyes on the artist, with an agony of entreaty in his face.

Signor Cessi put aside his palette, came forward, and gently pushed Luigi into a chair.

"Now," he said, "my poor fellow, tell us what has happened, and if we can we will help you."

And then the sorrowful little tale was told. How failure had been followed by sickness, and sickness well nigh by despair; how one after the other all their small belongings had found their way to the Monte di Pietà. Every stick of furniture, except the bed on which Chiara lay. And now that everything that they possessed had been pawned for bread, except the Marionettes, Luigi had come forth to see if, in this great city, there existed one kind soul who would help them.

Fate, or, rather let us say, a Power much greater than Fate, led him into that quarter of the city. As he was crossing the great burning

piazza, he remembered having heard of a deed of kindness which Signor Cessi had performed; and taking courage at this had mounted the steps, with but a faint hope in his heart that he might find him in the studio. He was not disappointed. A little handful of silver was made up between the two artists, enough for that day's necessities, and more was promised; and then came a glorious promise for the future.

"I," said Signor Cessi, "will paint a drop-scene for your Marionettes, which shall bring all Florence to see it. And you, Tonio, shall help me. We will have a composition of yours in the centre. Yes; one of those mythological subjects you are so fond of; and I will paint the border."

So Luigi went away comforted and grateful; carrying with him, what is most precious to a human soul—hope, where such a little while before reigned despair.

The hot season has passed; the first gracious rain in September has fallen and cooled the thirsty, burning ground; the large purple grapes have swelled and ripened, and the vintage has come. Through the land there is a sound of rejoicing. Everywhere the grass and flowers are springing up. The days are exquisite, the atmosphere is clear as crystal, the heavens a most lovely blue, the sunshine golden. The sweet breezes which stir the vine leaves seem to call on everyone to come forth and be glad. Then when the sun, a golden globe, sinks behind the purple mountains, the stars shine out, and the night seems even more beautiful than the day.

A rumour has run through Florence, gaining ground each day. Signor Cessi, that pearl among artists, has painted a masterpiece: roses more lovely than any that have ever glowed upon canvas: and they are to be seen in the course of a day or two, on the drop-scene of the humble stage of the Marionettes!

"Where and when?" ask the multitude of idlers. And these questions are repeated and answered until there are crowds waiting for the opening night, when this marvellous work of art is first to be placed before the public.

At last the day arrives. The little open space before the theatre is packed by dark heads. Some of them have been waiting for hours. There is a murmur of expectation on every side; you hear the name repeated of Signor Cessi. You hear it in spite of the loud beating of the drum. At last the door is opened, the people pour in, a continual stream. It seems that in an instant the little theatre is crammed. Even the doorway is crowded.

Yes, there it hangs, resplendent, glorious. No words can describe the beauty of the flowers; they twine up on each side, and hang down again in lovely clusters. You could put out your hand and pluck those roses fresh with dew. The picture in the middle is full of merit, the composition is capital, and the execution all that could be desired; but it is on the roses alone that everyone's eyes are fixed.

Crisp, exquisite, the shadows transparent, with lovely, pearly shades. Each pink rose seems to emit light from itself. It is a poem in flowers, and no other hand in the world could have painted it.

There is a murmur of applause, hushed only at last by the raising of the drop scene. But it is this and this alone that the crowds have come to see—not the Marionettes. And night after night it is the same. There is not room in the theatre for the crowds who pour in.

A Russian prince sends for Luigi. He offers him ten thousand francs for the drop scene.

"Eccellenza," he replies, hat in hand: "if you gave me its weight in gold pieces I would never part with it. It has saved our lives. But for the man who painted it, we should have died of hunger. God has blessed his work and brought us out of our despair. I will keep it for ever."

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#### BETROTHAL SONG.

As he who the dead night through unhappy watches and wakes,  
And is glad of the pallid surf where the first wave of morning breaks,  
As he long pent in a dungeon is glad of the first free breath,  
As he who is tortured with living is glad of the promise of death,  
As he who is weary to sickness is glad of the ceasing of strife,  
I am glad of the thought of your presence, of your feet in the ways  
of my life !

As autumn weeps for the summer, and night grieves after the day,  
As age reaches arms back to youth, and December thrusts hands out  
to May,

As all that is sad and unloved desires all that is happy and dear,  
As all that is stormy and dark loves all that is quiet and clear,  
As despair yearns back for a life burnt out at an idol's feet,  
My heart yearns passionate after whenever you leave me, Sweet !

As the world, with its broken lives, hopes ever, for ever longs  
For a new bright life that shall lighten its darkness and right its  
wrongs,

As the starlight dreams of the moon, as the moonlight dreams of the  
sun,

So I dream of the day that is coming, when I and my heart shall be  
one :

When you who are one with my heart, with all of its pleasure and  
pain,

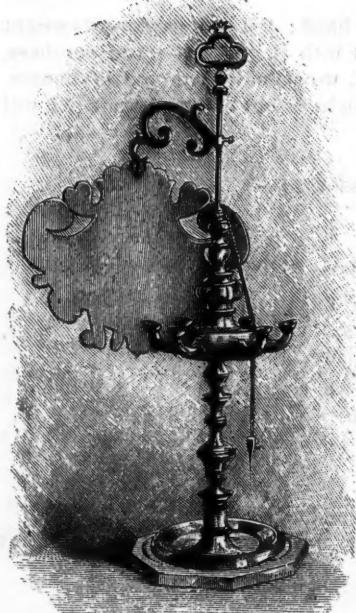
Shall be one with my life for ever, and never leave me again !

E. NESBIT.

## LETTERS FROM MAJORCA.

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "THROUGH HOLLAND,"  
"UNDER NORTHERN SKIES," ETC., ETC.

Palma, November 14, 1886.



MY DEAR E.—"Les jours se suivent et se ressemblent." But this is hardly true of our life in this Palma de Mallorca.

*Palma de Mallorca.* I am never tired of pronouncing these words, of writing them, or of hearing them spoken. The syllables, soft and liquid, flow musically as the murmur of a stream. Mallorca, too, has a more Southern, more poetical sound than our harder English *Majorca*, and inclines one to its adoption in future letters. It is also the correct word: you will look in vain for *Majorca* in any foreign atlas: and correctness in small things insures corresponding accuracy in life's greater events.

"Les jours se suivent et se ressemblent." A saying that has

passed into a proverb, with its burden of sadness. Who first wrote it must have been weary of life; at any rate, at that instant of time; for nothing is more certain than that the mind is elastic, and the heart quickly rebounds, and the sorrow of one hour may be turned into the joy of the next. Few memories are so tenacious, few hearts so faithful, that the glow of a great happiness or the gloom of a great grief, will influence all the future life. For the generality of mankind this is well. The few exceptions, with their greater capacities for suffering and rejoicing, are those who more often than not might have recorded upon their tombstone the short and comprehensive epitaph: *Miserrimus*.

"Les jours se suivent et se ressemblent." One can fancy it echoed by some prisoner in the old Bastille, his only visitors the mice who daily come to be fed from his hand. Or by a Napoleon at

St. Helena, with weighty memories sapping the very springs of life. And under such circumstances they bear a double meaning.

Who has not pictured to himself that solitary figure on a distant island, with firmer chains about his soul than the iron links that restrain the liberty of a convict? Growing sadder and more hopeless as not only the days but the years followed and resembled each other so closely. Looking out seawards with despairing gaze from early dawn to dewy eve; seeing in imagination far off lands where battles had been fought and triumphs won, and, like Alexander, he almost sighed for fresh worlds to subdue; a world, indeed, of which he was all but the master, invariably going forth conquering and to conquer: until the hour and the man arose who broke the charm of his successes and turned the current of his life for ever.

But in this Palma de Mallorca our days have in them a certain amount of variety, and we are by no means weary of existence. Which I will not deceive you, as the renowned Mrs. Gamp said to her partner in wickedness, Mrs. Prig: we are even greatly enjoying ourselves in a quiet, harmless way.

We even date forward with a certain dread to a time when all this must pass away, and we shall leave this bright town and island and atmosphere, and embark with a cargo of Mallorcan pigs for Spain en route for England, and the attendant horrors of an English winter. However, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may:" let us not anticipate. Perhaps before the end of our stay we shall have decided to pitch our future tent here and cast in our lot with the Mallorcans!

Only yesterday I wrote to you, and yet to-day has not been at all spent as we spent yesterday. My last letter might be described as an indoor record; this will rather be an outdoor summary of small chronicles. So, at least, I imagine, for nothing is more certain than that the pen rules me, and not I the pen. I simply follow its lead.

I have already warned you that this is a dreamy place, with a certain lotus influence about it, making one not quite responsible for the course of events, or any eccentricity of conduct. With the Mallorcans it develops into a certain sluggish inactivity, which causes them to act rather like the Turks in the East. They, you know, take things very calmly and quietly: fold their hands and cross their legs, and accept with equal indifference what life brings or takes away, rather than attempt by a little energy to overcome circumstances.

Perhaps the Turk goes further than the Mallorcan; for he quietly squats upon the ground, allows the roof of his house to fall in, and, while watching the ruins with sleepy eyes, calls upon Mahomet to bear witness to the wreck. "Allah! Il Allah!" he cries. "Let it be so. Why build it up again, since it is written that we are to pass away?"

The Mallorcan is not at all as bad as this. His house is kept in order, roof in repair, ground cultivated, though he might do more

in this matter. Lastly, he drives a great trade in pigs. This, of necessity, stirs him up ; for, if you do not master your pigs, they will certainly master you. Like a refractory patient or an ill-trained mind, they require constant discipline and close watching.

Nevertheless, the Mallorcan has no real enterprise, as I am led to believe. Some progress he must make, because the tendency of the whole world is towards progress. But the Mallorcan's progress is merely one of degrees. What was good enough in the past, will do for the present.

In our daily life here there are, of course, certain events that do resemble and repeat each other. Such, for instance, as my daily trouble with H. C., who would like to spend all his hours in church, studying fair penitents. Such as the fine phrenzies of his poetic moods, which are by no means diminishing, as I had fondly hoped.

Only this morning he came in, and, with a wild stare, said that, during the night, he had composed five-and-twenty fourteen-syllabled ten-lined stanzas, and entitled them "Rhymes of Rheims." He gave it the English pronunciation, and I asked him quite innocently if he hadn't got rather mixed, and meant "*Reams of Rhymes*."

He cast me one look in reply. I trembled.

Then he began to spout, with tragic action and melodramatic tone, his five-and-twenty fourteen-syllabled ten-lined stanzas. He declaimed : "Rheims ! Rheims ! Oh, Rheims !"

I felt my brain going, and parodied out with appropriate tone and action : "Reams ! Reams ! Oh, Reams !"

He gave me another look. I disappeared. Discretion is the better part of valour. "He who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day."

I suddenly remembered that I wanted some blotting-paper, left my breakfast untasted upon the table, and went off. I bought three sheets of it, *par parenthèse*, for which they charged me the advanced price of fourteen pence.

When I returned, will you believe that he had taken a very mean revenge ? To quote again the renowned Mrs. Gamp, I would not have debaged myself by such a proceeding. He had not only consumed his own portion of pastry, but mine also ; eaten both rolls, and drunk up all the coffee. I was worse off than Mrs. Hubbard's dog. But I had the consolation of seeing that he looked really very ill and uncomfortable, and that the fine phrenzy of the poet's mood had merged into a state of comatose. I couldn't help declaiming :

"Rolls ! Rolls ! Oh, Rolls ! how fondly I would keep you !  
But base revenge stept in, and now I weep you !"

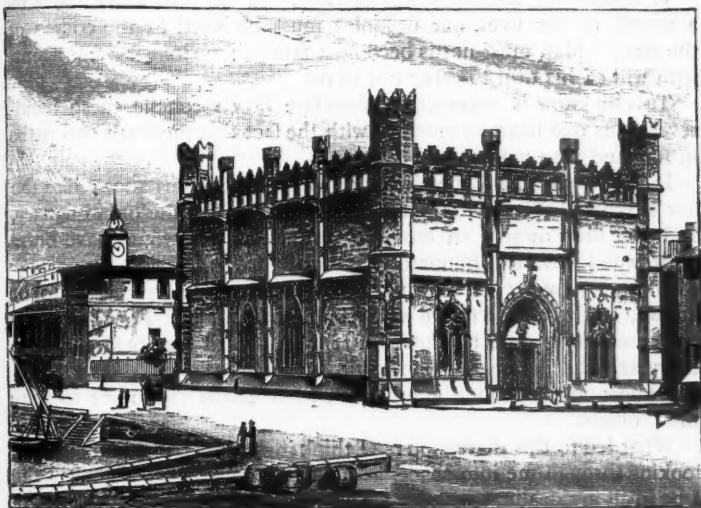
Of course, I don't pretend to be a poet, and this was very inferior to H. C.'s fine flights of fancy : but, good or bad, it had no effect upon him ; he was too far gone.

I had another breakfast brought up, and H. C. revived miraculously,

with the poetic glare I have learned to dread. He looks at you evidently without seeing you. You have an uncomfortable feeling of being transparent, and that he is looking through you into infinite space.

I never had this feeling of transparency communicated to me except once in the drawing-room of Madame Moscheles, whose beautiful white head for me is surrounded by a halo, because she was the friend of Mendelssohn.

There I met a lady I had never seen before, who told fate, fortune and character by the lines in the hand ; told my past and present so accurately that I trembled lest all the weaknesses and indiscretions of my nature should be brought to light. Either these were not



THE LONJA.

recorded, or she was merciful. She also revealed my future, but that I keep to myself. It contained some lovely bits, which I will not spoil by anticipation.

One other fortune or fate she "cast," that of a young man who played the piano marvellously, and seemed altogether a very original character.

Our soothsayer was a very Sybil. Before five minutes were over I watched him turn pale. Two minutes more, and he withdrew his hand altogether. "It is too strong," he said, translating the French expression into English. "You tell me what no one on earth knows but myself. I cannot let you go on. You are exposing my life."

He seemed really alarmed. The Sybil : a charming, delicate woman, with pale, quiet face and calm manners : replied that she could only disclose what his hand taught her : and the séance ended.

It had only been a sort of entr'acte in a recess, amongst our three selves, between the intervals of some very delightful music. She appeared thoroughly in earnest, and an absolute believer in the art. We have never chanced to meet again; but some day in this narrow world we shall do so; and then I shall ask her for a second Interpretation.

There are people who believe firmly in this science of palmistry, as it is called. It is, as the Scotch would say, uncanny. Less distant, it seems almost as mysterious and unfathomable as the science of astrology. The Wise Men of the East believed in this in their day; perhaps the wise men of the West are also advancing.

It makes one slightly uncomfortable. If we thus carry about us a record of our lives, our destinies must be fixed as the course of the stars. Man must needs become a fatalist: no longer a free agent, with will of his own to do or not to do.

This we know is impossible; therefore how reconcile these hand-revelations one hears so much of with the fact that there are two paths in life, and man may choose either?

Is it all chance, all guess work? A happy circumstance: like the few successful prophecies that made the fortunes of the old almanacs, and gave their owners an enviable distinction that would have burnt or drowned them two hundred years ago?

Or is man really learning to interpret secrets never meant to be known, and to read a future wisely hidden from all? For who would have courage to face his future if it were spread out before him in characters that he might read, mark and learn?

I know nothing about it, and leave wiser heads than mine to solve the problem.

What led to this digression? I think it was H. C. in a fine phrenzy, looking through me into space, as if I were transparent. Thus would I be in all my dealings with my fellow-men; but to be looked through and through in other ways is never physically comfortable, and not always morally convenient.

A fresh supply of breakfast came up, and I had great difficulty in preventing the Grasp of Greed from appropriating, a second time, my frugal fare.

For all that, I saw that he was in one of his most exalted, therefore most troublesome, phases; and I felt that a counter-irritant would be necessary.

It was market day, and my "crumbs of comfort" snatched from the very clutches of avarice, and happily disposed of, I suggested a walk to this very interesting and delectable thoroughfare. I must say he is very good. With all his fine phrenzies and star apostrophes, and architectural disquisitions, I have never yet proposed anything that he has not at once seconded. This is a great virtue in a travelling companion, when responsiveness is everything. So for the market we started.

Here, you will say, was prosiness enough ; and you will feel inclined to laugh at our "going to market," like the Pretty Maid in the rhyme ; though, by the way, I never could see that it *did* rhyme.

I assure you, you would be wrong. There are markets and markets, just as there are people and people : some who are born handsome, and others who have the misfortune to be—the opposite. Charlotte Brontë was quite right ; ugliness is a great misfortune. But nature is merciful ; it is the plain people who as a rule are vain of their good looks. This is no greater mystery than it is a fact. You will have noticed, too, that people to whom nature has withheld her charms, are the very people who dress most conspicuously and in the worst taste.

But to be surrounded by good looks and refined faces, and gentle, delicate ways, and sweet voices—what an amazing difference this makes to one's life. If it be a weakness, I plead guilty to it, and have no wish to be absolved from it.

All this does not apply to Palma, where there is very little evidence of bad taste, and where both men and women are often singularly favoured and attractive.

I am told that this prepossessing type is peculiar to Palma, and does not by any means extend to the other parts of Mallorca. The only other exception is Felanitx, said to be famous for its pretty girls. I intend to visit Felanitx, not in the least for my own edification, but that I may have the pleasure of informing you as to the correctness of this statement.

In Palma many of the people have refined and delicate faces, well-carved, chiselled features, often a pale olive complexion. They are usually dark, with liquid eyes and well-marked brows and raven hair—if such a thing exists. The women, as I have told you, are graceful—the men well made, straight and supple. They walk well, too, and do not, like most Englishmen, point their toes and come down heel first.

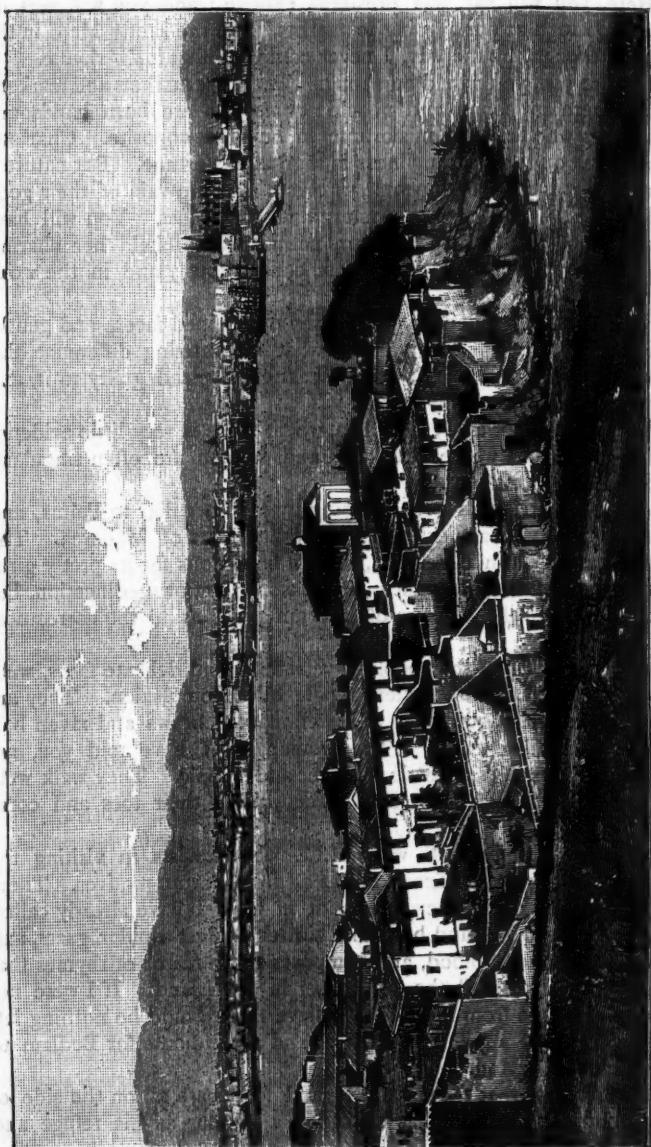
I have my daily task with H.C., who persists in visiting the churches during "les Offices," not at all from devout motives. There is sure to be a houri somewhere, bent in what I have already called picturesque devotion, and he plants himself against a pillar, gazes, and sighs away his heart-blood, and composes those reams of rhymes that will shortly exhaust all the MS. paper in the island. If I were not there to save him from himself, I believe there would be nothing left but the wreck of a brilliant intellect and a candidate for Bedlam to take back to England.

It is fortunate that these frailties and follies are all on the side of Telemachus, and that he has so sedate a Mentor as his refuge and safeguard.

But to the market. You will say we are a long time on the road to this desired haven.

In truth it is not easy to pass quickly through the streets of Palma.

PALMA.



Palma, a city on the island of Majorca, situated on a rocky headland, with its houses built on the edge of the cliff, overlooking the sea.

Some fresh feature for ever strikes one. A new court, not hitherto discovered, with beautiful pillars and fine arches, a dignified staircase and exquisitely-wrought ironwork. Distracting ecstasies ensue, playing havoc with the tenth Commandment, and almost persuading you to forget your "Duty to your Neighbour," which prohibits picking and stealing. This, perhaps, is not often "broken in the keeping"; can we say as much for the other clauses in that long and difficult portion of the compilation, which caused our childhood more tears in the learning than I fear to the breaking our manhood has given sighs?

Or perhaps a singular balcony, with wonderful ironwork of chaste design, not before noticed, suddenly arrests our gaze. Or the Gothic ornamentation of some old house; or a fine mediæval doorway; or a church porch standing open, and inviting one to enter and study form and symmetry in the attitude of a picturesque penitent.

The shops, too, possess some interest, more on account of those who serve than of what they display. Of bric-à-brac shops there are few left, and one of these few is kept by a policeman, who parades the town in uniform and stick, is as harmless but less noisy than the watchman, and has nothing to do.

Here we have been lucky enough to meet with one of the old Palma lamps, of which I enclose you a sketch.

It is quite a Mallorcan feature. Composed of brass, it has six burners, is classical in form, and has a screen which may be used as a reflector or a shade.

These lamps burn oil, and the wicks are kept in order by a small pair of pincers hanging from a chain. Another chain bears an extinguisher. In Palma they use olive oil, because it is cheapest. The light is the loveliest, purest, whitest you can imagine.

The first time we saw one we were going down a narrow street, and, in the gathering gloom, a woman crossed a courtyard holding this lighted lamp. Everything was so much in keeping that we were charmed. The ancient vestibule, with its pillars and arches and ironwork; the woman, with flowing garments, and mantilla hastily thrown upon her head; this classical lamp: all harmonized as if they had been made for each other. A picture not to be found elsewhere; a chance effect, stamped vividly upon the imagination.

Of course we immediately longed to be the possessors of one. Fortune favoured us. Our policeman, who has no prisoners to capture, had captured a lamp. Deeds of darkness failing him, he turns to those of light.

They are ancient these lamps, and are not reproduced, as I am told. All these assertions I accept in faith. This lamp bears every evidence of age, and must be genuine. Besides that, I have too much confidence in the integrity of a Mallorcan policeman to doubt him for a moment. The lamps are also of different sizes, and the smaller, with one or two burners, are almost more classical in form than those with five or six. They remind one of ancient Rome and the "Last

"Days of Pompeii," though why of the last days only, I hardly know. But you can almost fancy that you see Nydia, the blind girl, hurrying through the street with just such another in her hand.

Palma was once a great place for picking up genuine bric-à-brac and all kinds of curiosities: old glass, carved and inlaid furniture, majolica ware. Much of this came from the houses of the nobles, who were gradually reducing their collections. Those days have departed. Everything worth having has been appropriated.

It has been a matter of dispute as to whether or not Majolica ware first came from Mallorca. As in most matters of history, there is doubt and division upon the subject. The verdict seems now to be given rather against Mallorca. Be this as it may, there is a very fine collection of Majolica scattered about the island; not, alas, for sale, but in the possession of those who know how to value and retain it.

This bric-à-brac repository is not far from our tea shop, which has really become our consolation. Here I buy tea, and H. C. goes in extensively for jam. The first day we entered and asked for a supply of tea, the master informed us that it was so much an ounce. Would we take an ounce or two ounces.

We would take a pound. The man stared, staggered, fell into a trance. Finally he recovered, took up paper and pencil, put down so many separate ounces, made his calculation, and brought out the sum total at six shillings. We cheerfully paid it. This is moderate for tea abroad, where it is generally much better than in England. The cheap teas of the English market are ruining the constitution of the country. I would sooner take slow poison than your cheap English teas.

We gained much of our intimate knowledge of these shops the day we sallied forth in search of a tea-making apparatus. Everywhere the people were good, patient and civil, though we spoke like Irving in an unknown tongue, and interpreted chiefly by signs which did *not* produce wonders. And when we did not buy because what they had suited not our purpose, they seemed more genuinely sorry for our disappointment than for their own.

This is as it should be. One likes to feel that, after all, there is a great deal of good in human nature; a substratum of earnest purpose in many an apparently frivolous exterior.

Only this morning I experienced a kindly action.

I was on my way to the post office, to consign your letter amongst others to the uncertainties of the Spanish mails. Suddenly a shower came on and rain descended heavily.

I took refuge in the shop at the corner of the steps leading to our original acquaintance, the photographer. This establishment was more in your line than in mine, for it contained frills, flounces and furbelows; delicate laces and refined arrangements in white for neck and sleeves, of which I appreciate the effect without knowing their classical name.

The master of these airy, fairy substances came forward with enviable grace, and gave me a chair. Of course he could see that I was not a customer, but a refugee. Gentlemen do not wear frills and flounces, except in pantomimes and private theatricals. As he knew some little French, and I have picked up a few, very few words of Mallorcan, a lively conversation ensued. To a listener, the mixture of tongues and gestures, and the totally new words created, would have been edifying.

The rain continued to descend, and he offered me an umbrella with unstudied politeness.

If you visit a Spaniard, he will place his whole house at your disposal. If you admire anything in particular, or everything in general, it is yours. You are not expected to accept it, and if from ignorance or absence of mind you do so, you will find that presently he will send for it back again. Nothing is more certain than that in Spain, a friend will offer you everything he has, himself into the bargain ; and it is equally certain that everything has to be graciously declined, himself included.

But when this Good Samaritan offered me an umbrella, it was meant to be taken in good part. It would certainly have been put to the test, had our conversation not outlasted the rain. He seemed disappointed, evidently wishing to make an occasion for a second visit and a second French conversation. He was good enough to say that it was a lesson to him, who was forgetting his French for want of exercise.

Yet, though I have no umbrella to return, I mean to indulge him and honour myself by another call, knowing that it will give pleasure.

And in a town where ninety-nine people out of every hundred one meets speak only an unknown tongue, you cannot imagine the pleasure one also receives in meeting the hundredth, with whom it is possible to exchange civilized thoughts in the ordinary way.

But to the market—for I am anticipating. The above incident happened after we had paid our visit, and when H. C. had settled himself for sketching, with a congregation of curious gazers at his elbow.

On our way to this market, in a narrow but picturesque street, paved with petrified cobbles, we came upon a shrew.

A grand dispute was going on, and the noise and commotion might have been heard from pavement to dome of St. Paul's Cathedral or St. Peter's at Rome. An admiring crowd was gathered round the small doorway. A flight of stairs leading to the first floor was lined with women, of whom our shrew and spokeswoman was leader. A young woman and an old one, in the doorway, were evidently plaintiffs in this trial by female jury : which is as much as to say that prejudice, not right, weighted the scales of justice.

Our sympathies were all in favour of the young woman. She was pretty ; neatly dressed, with a coquettish hood that set off her pale

features : whether pale from emotion or by nature, one could not tell. Animated as the shrew, but not so loud, she gave way to tears that would have softened even a Mallorcan pavement. The shrew—old, ugly, and substantial—had a visage inflamed by vindictive passions.

The younger woman had a large basket with her, and evidently belonged to the market. Something had gone wrong there. The shrew had cheated her, or threatened murder, or prophesied ill-luck, or declared that her lover would be faithless—a moral impossibility, with such a face and form. Whatever the grievance, the girl was in despair ; wept freely, wrung her hands, appealed publicly for justice and protection.

We did not wait the end. H. C. impulsively dashed forward, and was about to put a violent termination to the shrew's existence, when I forcibly dragged him away. She richly deserved the severest doom. Boiling over a slow fire was what we should have preferred ; a process, I believe, by cooks called simmering. It would have been lovely to gently simmer her to death ; but the consequences to us might have been inconvenient.

As we went off, we were greeted with a noise exactly resembling the squabble you have so often heard in "Faust," when girls and men rush on the stage and a pitched battle ensues between the opposing factions. I have always noticed, by the way, that on these occasions the women are always much more ferocious than the men ; much cleverer and more active with their hands and arms. I have an idea that this little bit of acting is very true to life.

#### The market at last.

It was crowded with stalls, with buyers and sellers. A great noise was going on. Foreigners can do nothing without noise, which is their keynote of life. They know nothing of "indoor" voices. Who gives out most sound, makes most way. You must confound your opponent by this power of sound much more than by argument. An Irishman has faith in a broken head, and will be convinced by this when nothing else would persuade him. But the Spaniards and Mallorcans, whilst even more noisy, happily, as far as I can see and learn, stop short of bloodshed.

The market is held in an ancient square, surrounded by heavy arcades. Everything necessary to human sustenance is sold here. The meat market had no attractions, and we passed it by. The fruit and vegetable market more than charmed us. The latter was picturesque with a variety of brilliant colours ; its Indian corn, profusion of tomatoes—pommes d'amour, as the French poetically call them—and large red capsicums. Tomatoes were a penny a pound, and this will give you some idea of prices in general. We were solicited on all hands to buy ; but disappointment, coupled with admiration, followed in our wake.

It was different in the fruit market. Here we found great treasures and abundance of temptation.

The grapes I have already mentioned, and we did not scruple to throw dignity to the winds and make much of our opportunity. Bags were at a premium, and we had occasionally to put up with cabbage leaves. But what mattered, in a place where we were unknown, and had only the gaze of the natives to confound us? It is one of the charms of Mallorca that so long as you do not break the Commandments, or set the Catechism at defiance, you may do what you will.

H. C. carried the spoils, and was very careful that—to quote for the third time the inevitable Mrs. Gamp—I should eat fair of the



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fruit that she preferred in the more liquid form. But you will not be surprised to hear that he acted Mrs. Prig on this occasion, who, in absence of mind, replenished her cup too often. This dissolved their friendship: ours fortunately exists on a sounder basis.

One man had a stall of pomegranates, large, red, luscious. These he was selling at a halfpenny each. An honest man, too, for when we wanted to pay him a trifle more than his charge, for a slight service rendered, he put back the coin into our hands.

He dexterously opened the pomegranates and prepared them in the most convenient form for eating, thoroughly enjoying our appreciation of the fruit and of his cleverness. Apples and oranges also abounded; and though the oranges were scarcely ripe, they gave out an exquisite flavour and perfume unknown to England.

It was a very animated scene, though not exactly one of pomp and pageantry. The crowd was actively employed, each doing his best for himself and his household. The air was full of sound. It seemed to vibrate about our ears.

The arcades threw over all a quaint, old-world look. From windows above them people looked down upon the stir and bustle. One of the houses is a Palma hotel; but I should hardly care to patronize any room or inn overlooking the market.

For after a certain hour, crowds diminish, buyers and sellers disappear, stalls are deserted until next morning or next market day; the emptiness is formal and depressing.

It is ever thus with all places where crowds congregate: inevitable contrast and reaction. Empty spaces are peopled with ghosts, reminding one forcibly of a day when we too must find our chair empty, our place filled by another; content, it may be, if we live in the remembrance even of one heart. If only one glance kindle, one pulse beat more quickly at the recollection of the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still. If even one hand will lay its tribute of affection on our tomb when by all else in the coming years we are remembered no more.

So you see that our visit to the market was not a case of "Love's Labour Lost," but would bear frequent repetition. H. C. at once plunged into poetry, inspired even by the unfermented juice of the grape; but on this occasion I spare you. In fact, my memory fails me. His flight was too exalted, the scene too remote. Nothing less than Olympus, where he mixed up gods and mortals, fruits and flowers, nectar and ambrosia, in great bewilderment and utter disrespect.

After this, H. C. went off to sketch an old corner bit he had rather fallen in love with; a picturesque building, which holds what looks like a town well or reservoir. But before reaching it we came upon another wonderful court, or rather set of cloisters, and were amazed at their beauty.

H. C. abandoned the idea of the old well on the spot, and began to work away at the cloisters.

They are oval, with wonderful pillars and arches in the Renaissance style. Half way up, a gallery runs round them, leading to various habitations and a small church or chapel. The pavement was enlivened by flowers and evergreens in earthenware jars. They probably date back to about the sixteenth century—the cloisters, not the evergreens—and we felt, indeed, far removed from the present time while gazing upon these records of a past age. But the enclosed sketch will give you a better idea of them than any description of mine. You will observe the beautiful pillars supporting the round arches, but you cannot realize the perfect oval of the court, and its singular look of age and refinement.

On our way, we passed the Town Hall. It is one of the remarkable

buildings of Palma, chiefly by reason of its overhanging eaves of wonderfully carved wood.

The carving hardly shows to advantage. You have to strain upwards, and the light and glare of the intense sun, and the bright blue of the sky, dazzle one's vision. What Dante calls the "devastating dust of time," has also partly obscured the devices; the dark tones here and there look powdered and faded. As far as one could see, the subjects were representations of Plenty and Abundance, symbolized even by the goddesses, who looked very Rubens-like in their amplitude. But I have never seen carving so massive or so magnificent.

The interior is also remarkable. You enter a large hall, with an oak ceiling boldly carved in squares, with deep mouldings. The ceiling looks as if it would defy time itself. It is dark and brown as the oldest mahogany.

Beyond it is a room given over to municipal and other business, hung round with pictures, some of which are good, and others good for nothing. One especially of St. Sebastian wriggling in the agonies of torture struck us, not sadly as it ought to have done, but humorously as it ought not to have done.

I believe this is attributed to a great master; and if so, I am quite sure the shade of the great master will haunt the building until they have done him restitution. It is just the place for a ghost, with great, dark, mysterious-looking rooms and a certain severe atmosphere.

Upstairs are the rooms where the Town Council sit, and where, for aught I know, judges deliver judgment. This is not at all the same Inquisitorial Council who impounded H. C. and threatened him with death and destruction. Chairs are placed in large horse-shoe form around a throne-like erection. Many portraits line the walls and many eyes look mournfully down upon the empty seats. They seem to say :

"Ev'n as we have had our day,  
This also must pass away."

Some are monarchs and some are simple men; but a story hangs by each. They all seem to have fought out life's battle bravely and made themselves famous.

They are enlivened, too, by a few women, who also made unto themselves a name, not by deeds of valour, probably, but by religious fervour and a consistent life. And when we remember that it is easier to die the death of a martyr than to live the life of a saint, this means heroism quite as much as the bravery which distinguishes a man on the battle-field.

Behind the building is a small court or garden. It is beautiful by reason of its trees and shrubs, which, in the sunlight throw out dancing shadows upon the white walls.

This garden is only a few feet square—or rather a few feet of a triangle; but after the depressing gloom of the ghostly rooms, the

little vision of green, the sunshine, and the dancing shadows, are intensely refreshing. Of course it has a well : what court in Palma, however small, has not : and this well, reposing under the shadow of spreading branches, is as necessarily picturesque.

We first came upon this garden yesterday, never before having ventured quite so far into the building. One is always haunted by a fear of intrusion, which, no doubt, diminishes one's courage, and causes one to lose many an object of interest and beauty.

We were at once struck with our discovery, and after revelling in it for five minutes, a bright idea struck us. We would here take each other's photograph. With two such interesting objects in the foreground, the background would make a perfect picture. We might carry away with us a souvenir and reminiscence to look at in years to come, when we had grown old and grey headed.

No sooner said than done. We went straight off to the hotel, took up our paraphernalia, and departed.

Our division of labour is thus :

H. C. carries the heavy leather box slung across his shoulders, by reason of his superior strength, whilst he condescendingly allows me to bear the tripod—a weight that would scarcely disturb a butterfly's wing. This is as much as I can manage ; and I have an idea that H. C. inwardly exults at his superiority over me in this respect ; does his best to suppress a feeling of contempt for my want of muscular power. It is, alas ! too true that, if I carried a volume to the end of the street, my arm would ache for hours afterwards ; whilst to carry the leathern box as far as the Town Hall, would deprive me of three days' growth.

But Nature has her compensations, and, in strength of character and moral purpose, I am as superior to H. C. as the stars are above the earth. It is true, you do not know him, and cannot realize this ; and should you ever chance to meet, I beseech you not to wound his feelings by such a revelation : for he has laid to his soul the flattering unction of superiority over me in every respect.

" Oh wad some power the giftie gie us,  
To see ousels' as ither see us."

But I don't agree with Burns. The consequence of this would be that we should all go through the world dumb images of despair. Far better go on in our " blunders and foolish notions ;" thinking well of ourselves if our consciences will allow it ; thinking better of our neighbours, if their reputation permits us this charity.

Well, we started with our usual division of labour, H. C. shoulder-ing the box with that amount of fervour and display, in themselves a sort of silent reproach ; and I meekly following with the tripod.

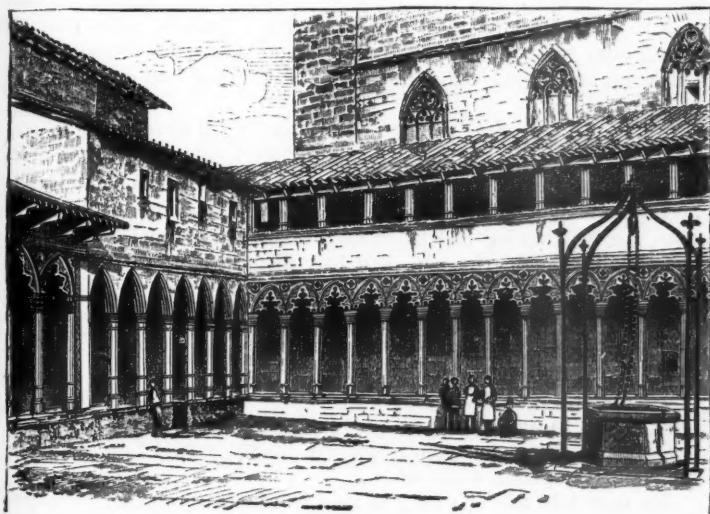
Antonio in the next room was simultaneously raising a cloud of dust and his usual novel, wild, unearthly echoes, which might be distinctly heard not only in the remotest recesses of the opposite

club, but almost in the quaint courtyard of the ancient castle of Belver itself.

He came out and looked after us as we went down, speculation in his gaze. He unbosomed himself to Francisco yesterday, and confessed that he was much exercised in mind ; had never come across similar travellers "companying" with cameras ; could not decide whether we were noblemen in disguise, ordinary English gentlemen, afflicted with a mania, or itinerant photographers pure and simple.

This is the penalty one has to pay for the least thing done out of the ordinary way.

We reached the little garden. The custodian of the Town Hall,



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in uniform and brass buttons, came to us, ascertained that our box contained no dynamite or other explosive substance, and very kindly left us to follow our pleasure.

We set up the camera, took infinite pains in the focussing, admired and congratulated each other upon the general effect ; and the sittings—or rather standings—triumphantly concluded. We at once carried the plates to our right-hand man in Palma—the original and obliging photographer, who does not now appear upon the scene for the first time.

He, by the way, is the most delightfully trusting being you can imagine ; allows me to choose and take away everything I like ; never examines what I put aside ; allows no payment ; but says : "By-and-by, before you leave, we can settle our differences." I have many of his views by me ; but whether I have ten, or whether I have fifty, he knows not, and seems quite happy in his ignorance.

To him we took our plates. He promised to develop and have them printed by the evening.

At eight o'clock we went down. His look was comical, but he said not a word as he placed the proofs before us.

What do you think had happened? All had come out as perfectly as possible, but we had no heads; absolutely no heads whatever. Had we been decapitated for high treason, and then sat for our portraits, they could not have come out more satisfactorily.

It was a mystery then, and it is a mystery now. My own opinion was, and is still, that the ghost of the great master that haunts the Town Hall had never before found anything worth running away with, seized upon this favourable opportunity, and carried off our heads. I admire his taste and judgment. Perhaps, after this, he would even think himself sufficiently recompensed for defamation of character, and would cease to haunt the building: an excellent way of laying a ghost.

It was, however, only resting one troubled spirit to raise two others. We were really confounded that both our heads should have mysteriously disappeared without rhyme or reason, whilst all else about the portraits was perfection. As for our photographer, after significantly enquiring whether we had taken each other before lunch or after (he knew well enough, since he had had them in hand by ten o'clock) he confessed himself equally unable solve the mystery.

This took place yesterday. We have not again had courage to take each other, and I doubt if we shall ever renew the attempt. The next time we might disappear altogether.

This afternoon we had another curious experience: nothing less than a visit to the prison. If ever it should be my fate to transgress the laws of my country and lose my liberty, may I find myself an inmate of the prison at Palma.

We were told that it would be hard to obtain admission. This was true in one sense. We wandered up and down, but could find no entrance. At length I went up to an officer in military uniform who chanced to be passing, addressed him in French, and made known our dilemma. I was fortunate. He replied fluently in the same language, and was at once all kindness and courtesy. We were quite a hundred yards out of our latitude, and he volunteered to be our guide.

Presently we came to a small door we had passed several times in contempt. He knocked; the custodian opened, and bowed down without question. Our guide was evidently one in authority, though he had nothing to do with the prison. We were admitted to the most ancient and beautiful of Gothic cloisters. You could not imagine anything more refined in the way of architecture. Their form was quadrangular and very perfect: the cloisters of an ancient monastery belonging to the Church of San Francisco, which, with its one tower, rises on the north side. This tower is an old minaret, dating back to the days of the Moors, and bears therefore a special interest.

The cloisters are the recreation ground of the prisoners, who were scattered about, and had no objection to be looked at. Some of them approached us and returned the compliments of our gaze ; not at all rudely, but curiously, as if our visit were a slight break or distraction in the monotony of their lives. No doubt it was so. People seldom visit the prison ; permission is not always given ; and few strangers come to Palma who take much interest in architecture.

In the centre of the quadrangle there was, of course, a well. No doubt in the old days many a cloistered monk had drawn water therefrom. Now one of the prisoners was busy with chain and bucket. Those old monks had made themselves prisoners for conscience sake ; these, possibly, were prisoners for want of conscience. They did not look especially bad, as far as one could observe them, and certainly none of them seemed unhappy.

The afternoon sun was casting long shadows. The delicate work of the Gothic arches found their reflections on the sheltered pavement. Everything seemed touched and gilded by rays of warm sunshine. The blue sky above was pure and ethereal. Where we could see nature, all was perfect. Man's handiwork here was also very perfect ; a refining, elevating atmosphere. Only these poor prisoners, with hair cut short and scanty garb, to remind one that there is a disturbing element in the world ; evil brought about by sin ; never intended, but permitted for some wise purpose.

We gazed long upon the scene. Our military guide remained with us, explaining many small matters and details, and seeming by no means anxious to hurry us away. He was so sympathetic and agreeable, and so polished, that I greatly desired his further acquaintance ; but we are on the point of moving about, and I did not quite see my way to future meetings. He lingered so much over our polite farewell that the same desire had evidently entered his mind, though he, too, refrained from giving it expression.

Before leaving I remarked that we should much like to see these cloisters again ; might even desire to sketch or photograph them. He turned to the doorkeeper and ordered that whenever it pleased us we were to be admitted. The man bowed low, and said his wishes should be obeyed.

We parted. Shall we chance to meet again during our sojourn in Palma ? Probably not, simply because I desire it. Yet who knows ? It is not, of course, a great matter or a fervent desire, and it is only in the great wishes of life that as a rule destiny seems against me.

Be this as it may, chance encounters of this description greatly sweeten the progress of one's travels, and afford many an after-moment's happy recollection. Man was not made for solitude. Contact with his fellows is necessary to existence. Sympathy, companionship, the delights of close friendship, the warm hand-clasp, gaze meeting gaze, and soul going out to soul—to live without this is to live only half a life. Withdrawn, there is heart-emptiness more bitter than

wormwood, sharper than a two-edged sword. And yet in most of the circumstances of life, fate so orders that the French proverb is only too true : *Il y a toujours un qui aime, et un qui se laisse aimer.*

But a truce to sentiment, at which, I am sure, you will very properly laugh.

And, fortunately, the great business of life, its end and aim, its duty, is not mere sentiment and feeling, but the healthier influence of hard work and action and progress. Man has to play his part on



PORTO PI.

the world's battlefield, where each has a more or less important niche to fill. Each has to see to his own lamp ; each so to spin his web of life, that when the hands are folded in their last rest, he may hear echoing through the realms of Eternity that whisper of the Invisible : **ALL IS WELL.**

Thus may it be with each one of those who dwell in our hearts—yours and mine—when for them, as well as for ourselves, **TIME SHALL BE NO MORE.**

The night cometh, and also the Morning.

### MARGARET'S FRENZY.

It was an unlucky day for me—though I was not born till ten years afterwards—when that big cellar door slammed to, and nipped off the end of Margaret's little finger at the early age of seven.

Margaret was passionately fond of music, but she could not sing, and her encounter with the door prevented her from being a first-rate performer on the piano. She would not content herself with anything short of perfection; and so for years long and many the music within her found no utterance. At last, after a few grey hairs began to show themselves among her thick brown braids, Professor Mohr advised her to learn the violin.

We were spending some happy years together in Germany, Margaret playing the rôle of guardian grimalkin to my kittenish innocence. We were not related, but as inseparable as the celebrated Ladies of Llangollen. I took drawing lessons, and we were both deep in languages. In our free hours we were careless and happy as lambs in clover, until Professor Mohr's unlucky suggestion started us on the high road to despair.

We were staying in Munich when this misfortune overtook us. Margaret was fired with enthusiasm at the thought of possibly being a good musician at last. She was past thirty, and for a while tortured herself with fears that this was too old to begin to learn anything so difficult as the violin. But they raked up for her benefit many instances of musical prodigies turned out late in life, to the astonishment of the world and themselves. Perseverance, aptitude, and health would do wonders.

Convinced at last of the wisdom of her undertaking, and radiant with hope, Margaret engaged a master at more marks an hour than would have paid for half a week of operas in the *Gallerie Noble*. She next commissioned some old virtuosi and dealers in musical instruments to ferret out for her a good violin from beneath the dust and rubbish of ages. No easy matter this: for Margaret had read deeply on the subject, and would be content with nothing of a later date than the 17th century; and the graining of the cunningly mosaiced sycamore must undulate under its golden varnish “like the setting summer sun on cloud and wave.”

At the expiration of a week, Herr Bratwurst wrote from the Tyrol, describing with flowery extravagance the jewel of an instrument he had unearthed at Brixen, among the goods and chattels of an Israelitish gentleman in the old clothes business. When found, this prize was a wreck, gone to pieces under billows of flimsy satin gowns, and theatrical coats of cotton velvet; but carefully set together again by the magic hand of a Bratwurst, it was worthy of Tarisio

himself. A fragment at the back bore the precious inscription "Antonius Stradivarius, Cremonensis, Faciebat Anno 1654."

And a portion of the instrument at least might be regarded as the work of this master. It was in shape a "Long Strad," and was a marvellous combination of sycamore, Swiss pine and lemon tree. The varnish was a delight to the eye, and the tone—but here words failed for description.

The supreme moment arrived when Margaret was to see this wonder, and decide whether or not she might call it her own. It seemed like opening a long buried coffin, they were so serious about undoing its box, which looked so worn and shabby.

Margaret was speechless with delight when Professor Mohr played upon it, went into technical raptures, and eventually paid for it, smilingly, the price of two good pianos. Connoisseurs, even those not interested, said it closely resembled an authentic Stradivarius, and as such was a bargain; so I kept my surprise locked in my ignorant bosom.

Margaret bought for her jewel a beautiful polished and inlaid mahogany case, lined with blue velvet. I, in a burst of enthusiasm, embroidered a fiddle-blanket of fine blue cloth, on which I executed in gold thread the treble clef, and Margaret's initials, M. A. C., in beautiful silks. A spray of flowers was depicted beneath, and I thought the whole thing a masterpiece of originality and skill. It was lined with satin, quilted, wadded and perfumed: and the case, with its blanket, would have made a nice bed for one of the roly-poly Bavarian princelings we saw in the street with their squadron of nursemaids.

Strange, uncouth sounds began now to issue from our little dwelling. It was a musical atmosphere where we lived, and people were prepared for the spasmodic wailing and sharp spiteful yells produced by a beginner on the violin. Otherwise I should have been ashamed.

Margaret worked with a feverish energy, and I must confess that she made rapid progress. From early morning till as late at night as the police regulations allowed, she fiddled as if for her life. She sawed the empty air with her bow to exercise certain elbow-muscles; played before the mirror to break herself of making hideous faces, which caused me great delight; racked her brains over harmony, and split her own ears and mine with studies ahead of her capacity. Her energy drove me to greater activity in my drawing, which, however, did not bring increased pleasure. There must have been something wrong in my character that I was not happier for this furious emulation of the busy bee. Margaret often said, with a shake of the head: "If I were eighteen like you, Kate, instead of twice that age, I would make something of myself." Then, ashamed of neglecting my opportunities, I would go up on the roof and sketch clouds, while the other girls went off for a ramble in the solitude.

We gave up going to drink coffee of an afternoon in the Hof Garten. The band there was all brass, and Margaret was mad after strings. We trailed to Symphony concerts till I was bored to death, and Margaret looked victimised in the picture-galleries where formerly we had spent such happy hours together. I began to rue the day that she decided to become famous, and a jealous hatred of the fiddle arose within me. It had already spoiled half my pleasure in Margaret's society, and she grew daily more absorbed in the senseless thing. If relief did not come from some quarter soon, our friendship of years was likely to go to pieces.

These superhuman labours began to tell on Margaret, after a while, and her teacher advised her to take a few weeks' rest in the Tyrol. I gladly agreed to accompany her, and our preparations for the trip were quickly made. I was secretly in raptures at the thought of getting rid of my enemy the fiddle for awhile; but alas! I was doomed to disappointment. While arranging our hand luggage in as compact a form as possible, I learned that the violin was to accompany us.

"But, Margaret, you need rest. Why not leave the violin here in safe hands, and return to it refreshed?" I said, hypocritically.

"I should lose in a week all I have toiled for through months," she said, with a reproachful glance: and I demurred no longer.

Margaret then began to solemnly roll the instrument of torture in a yard of flannel, cover it further with my blanket and an old silk handkerchief of generous dimensions, draw a green baize bag over the resplendent mahogany case, and fastening a shawl-strap round the whole, declared it ready for its travels.

My fears that the fiddle would be a marplot throughout our journey were not without foundation, and I soon realized that as a trip for rest and recreation, ours was turning out a failure. From the start Margaret bewildered and overwhelmed with admonitions every porter and railway official who laid hold of the baize bag with its precious contents, watching them with lynx eyes, and trotting along beside any in whose glance gleamed the unlawful fire of covetousness.

At Rosenau there was a collision between the baize bag and a brass-nailed trunk, and a hole was stove in the side of the former. When Margaret found a big scratch on the mahogany case, she sat down on a truck and wept openly. As we were to tarry a few days at Rosenau, I begged my companion to have a stout box of common wood made for the fiddle to continue its journey in, and send the too magnificent receptacle back to Munich.

To this she consented, and when we again set forth, the precious instrument reposed in a black pine box of gruesome shape. It was heavily and clumsily made, with a key as big as Mrs. Bluebeard's; it looked very like a small coffin; but it was cheap, and strong enough to resist any amount of ill-usage.

We stopped a fortnight or more at Haidenfeld, in the southern

Tyrol ; a pretty, restful nook with a deep lake walled in by cloud-high mountains, a half-ruined monastery, about which a few spectral monks still hovered, and an enticing maze of walks through heather and fragrant pine. A place for people not fiddle-ridden to enjoy every moment.

Margaret was not in the mood to enjoy the beauties of nature. Evening after evening I sat alone on our little balcony, watching the icy crest of the Adlerberg flush an exquisite pink in the setting sun, and pale again to silvery white. I longed for my friend's ear into which to pour my extravagant delight in this scene ; but she was in the back room wrestling with a flageolet tone or some other intricacy she feared might escape her.

I saw clearly that Margaret's vacation was doing her no good, and I was uneasy for her health. The study of the violin was a great strain upon the strongest nerves, and Margaret had always been rather delicate. We had both fallen under a baleful, uncanny influence, and I devoutly wished that Professor Mohr and Herr Bratwurst might have played golden harps in Heaven before lashing Margaret into this fiddle-frenzy.

While my rival absorbed the greater part of Margaret's time, I was forced to shift for myself and make the most of whatever amusement fell in my way. A good-looking young fellow, with curly black hair standing straight up from his forehead, and the merriest blue eyes I ever saw, seemed to understand my hard lot, and did his best to ameliorate it.

Our acquaintance began by my inadvertently stepping on him as he lay half asleep in the shadow of some hawthorn bushes. His name was Herbert Stacy. He was studying sculpture, and he too was taking a holiday rest in the Tyrol. We happened to have some friends in common, so our acquaintance was quite proper, and I must confess that after it began I felt a little less preyed upon by the violin.

Margaret smiled benignly enough on our insipient flirtation, but her thoughts soared above us, and she let us take frequent rambles alone. I knew that the Haidensee was a beautiful intense blue, and that the rhododendron covered the hard cheeks of the mountains with a rich lovely blush, but I did not seem half to appreciate these glories till Mr. Stacy pointed them out to me.

One day he told me, with evident regret, that he was obliged to set out for Venice the next day. Queen Margherita's birthday was approaching. There was to be a fête of unusual magnificence on the Grand Canal, and Mr. Stacy had promised some relatives of his to be with them during this celebration. It was an odd fancy going to Venice in the summer, but the journey was not very long, and their stay would be of brief duration.

So our little idyl was to end abruptly, and I should be left alone again. We had quite an affecting parting ; Mr. Stacy kissed my hand very tenderly, in Continental fashion, which I liked very much

We exchanged souvenirs. I gave him a coin from my bangle, and he presented me with a holly-wood bear supporting a thermometer. The mercury in this was defective, pointing always to 65° whatever the changes of temperature, but I prized it far above my other treasures.

My uncle Robert was to be in Venice for this same fête, I had heard, and so I gave his address to Mr. Stacy, thinking they might like to meet. The latter seemed pleased, and said he would look up my relative without fail. How I wished Margaret and I might go too! But my slender purse would not permit so expensive a journey. Margaret could go; but she, out of kindly consideration for me, always cut her coat according to my meagre supply of cloth, instead of indulging in the ample garment her means allowed.

After Herbert Stacy went, Haidenberg seemed unbearably dull, and at my request Margaret and I wandered to fresh pastures a little farther south. Here I received a letter which sent me soaring into the seventh heaven of delight. Uncle Robert sent me a generous cheque, and begged Margaret and me to join him at Venice for the fête. His wife's niece, Miss Laurie, was with him, and we should doubtless enjoy each other's society.

I remembered Madge Laurie as an unconscionable flirt, about three years older than I. I didn't like her at all then, but now I was willing to consort with anyone for the sake of a glimpse at Venice and all its gaieties at that season. And best of all, Herbert Stacy was to be there, and we should meet again! How lucky that I was going; otherwise there would be no one to prevent Madge Laurie from getting him into her toils. I felt myself a match for her now.

Uncle Robert gave us minute directions about our route over the mountains by diligence, and by train from Belluno; we must be very exact in our arrangements, or we should all miss each other. He was obliged to be in Verona at a certain date, and could not tarry in Venice a day after the fête. We must notify him at once whether he might expect us or not, and if we could not arrive surely by the seventeenth we had better remain quietly where we were.

A diligence left that very hour which would take our answer, and the next morning we could start, arriving at noon of the seventeenth if all went well.

This most promising of journeys began very auspiciously on a cool delicious morning. We mounted to the coupé places in the diligence; the driver, a saucy-eyed fellow with a bunch of rhododendron in his hat, bared his head, mumbled a prayer and crossed himself before he took the reins. We started off at a fine pace over a road like a marble floor.

Even to us wayfarers who had grown quite familiar with the grand plunge and roar of an avalanche, the giddy fall of glacier torrents, the plumpy pines, jauntily worn cloud-veils and other mountain-millinery,

this drive would be for all time a memorable one. Italy lapped over into the Tyrol and gave the people dark lustrous eyes, lithe figures, a graceful port, and picturesqueness of costume long before we left Austrian territory.

Near Croce Bianca a pathetic incident occurred. A wan-looking woman came out from a cottage and walked slowly towards us, bearing a small black box on her head. She said a few sentences in Italian to our guard, who reverently pushed the rough little coffin in among the luggage at the back of the diligence. He afterwards told us that it contained the body of a baby who had died the previous day. Its mother, fatally ill at the cottage, had begged that it might be buried at Pieve di Cadore, her birthplace, where she had friends who would receive it.

It was quite out of the ordinary custom to make the diligence a funeral car for a peasant baby; but regulations were elastic in that part of the world, and our guard seemed ready to risk reproof in order to gratify a dying woman's wish.

Pieve di Cadore, the birthplace of Titian, as well as of the poor woman who had lost her baby, was a mile or more distant from the diligence road. For passengers wishing to visit this place an omnibus was sent to the cross-roads; those more prosaically inclined remaining at an inn for dinner and repose.

We were among the latter, and, after taking refreshment, watched at our ease from afar the bustle of changing horses and men and escorting travellers and luggage from one conveyance to the other. At nightfall we reached Marina, where we were provided with supper, and a room decorated with pictures of saints in smiling torture.

The next morning, as we had some hours to spare before resuming our journey, Margaret astonished me by sending for her violin.

"You don't mean to say you have brought the fiddle on this expedition, of all others!" I exclaimed blankly.

"Of course I brought it. It would not have been safe otherwise, and I was not sure we should return by this route. I bade the waiter put it in the diligence without your knowledge, as I sometimes fancied it annoyed you."

"Very well," I returned resignedly. "I will go out for a walk while you practise." And I suited the action to the word without further delay.

My thoughts were very cheerful companions. The next afternoon would find us in Venice; the day following would be a red-letter one for all the year: the birthday fête, the wonders of the marine city, meeting again Herbert Stacy. All was like a delicious dream, short and sweet as dreams are, but amply worth any fatigue and discomfort which the journey might cause.

When I returned from my walk, I found Margaret in floods of tears, pacing the room distractedly and wringing her hands in undisguised distress. When she could control her voice she told me a woeful tale.

When I went out she had sent for the violin. After some unaccountable delay, a man appeared, bringing a black box, which was like—and yet strangely unlike—the fiddle case. “A creepy feeling ran down my back as I looked at it,” she said. “I sent the man to look again, but he declared there was no other black box among the luggage, except a hat-case. He grew quite violent about it, and I suppose I was excited, too, for the truth was beginning to dawn upon me. Finally, he ran away and got a screwdriver, opened the box, and started back with an exclamation which confirmed my worst fears. It contained that poor little baby, looking as beautiful and peaceful as anything you can imagine.”

“How dreadful! But you must have recovered from the shock now, Margaret, dear?”

“Shock? You don’t seem to realise that they have buried my violin.”

I dropped limply into a chair.

“There is not a moment to lose,” Margaret continued. “I must take the first conveyance back to Pieve. It breaks my heart to have you go on alone to Venice, and I shall feel uneasy about you every moment. But what can I do? Oh! dear, dear; was ever anything so distressing!”

“Couldn’t we leave the fiddle till after our trip?”

“How can you make such a wild suggestion, Kate? It would be ruined by lying so long in the damp earth. Prompt action may possibly save it from being buried at all. No, I must go at once to the rescue.”

I saw that remonstrance would be perfectly useless; Margaret would be frantic if restrained. She could not go back to Pieve alone, because to explain her mission there, Italian would be necessary, and Margaret had not learned the language, which I spoke well. She had befriended me to her own inconvenience in a thousand instances already, and it was plainly my duty to stand by her now. She did not know how great the sacrifice would be for me, for I had not told her of my hope of meeting Herbert Stacy.

After a brief, bitter conflict with myself, I said: “I will go back to Pieve with you.” And as I uttered these words I felt mentally all the torture which the wriggling saints on the wall expressed in their bodies.

“But, dear child, you will miss the fête; there is not time for both.”

“Never mind that. I didn’t feel much interest in it, anyway. It was the—the scenery I liked, and we have had the best of that already.” I was determined to play my part of martyr gracefully, even at the expense of truth.

“How good of you, Kate! I hated more than words can express to go alone among all those queer people. I couldn’t explain my mission, and they would probably think me a murderer. Never mind! I will take you to Venice next year, if I have to go in rags to accomplish it.”

"Alas! next year there will be no Herbert," I thought, regretfully.

An ill-assorted pair of steeds attached to an antiquated vehicle took us and the poor baby back to Pieve at an irritating jog-trot. I didn't care whether Titian was born there, or born at all, for that matter, and I vouchsafed hardly a glance at his house as we passed. I was too downcast and disappointed (though I strove to conceal my feelings from Margaret) even to feel amusement at the ridiculous errand upon which we had come.

It was as Margaret feared; the black box containing the violin had been taken by mistake from the diligence, received and wept over as holding the defunct baby: and as such had been buried, with an accompaniment of wax tapers and dyed immortelles, the previous afternoon.

Our story collected about us what seemed to be the whole village, open-eyed, open-mouthed; and these features, when Italian, can accomplish wondrous flashing and chattering under excitement.

The veritable baby was followed to the churchyard by a procession which would have delighted the soul of its mother, could the poor woman have seen it.

After Margaret and I had undergone, from judicial authority, a fire of cross-questioning, beginning with the maiden name of our respective mothers, and ending with our opinion of Tyrolean scenery, the men we had engaged were allowed to raze the little mound which covered Margaret's treasure.

As the grave was opened, a great many blue linen aprons were pressed to fine dark eyes, sobs broke from linen-covered bosoms hung with chains of more or less claims to sterling worth, and heads wreathed in black braids thrust through with silver pins, bobbed to and fro with emotion. This exhibition of sentiment seemed out of place over the remains of a fiddle, but it was easier for the peasant women to weep over a grave, as was their wont, than to discriminate.

The box was taken out, and even Margaret admitted that the violin appeared to be uninjured. We waited while they buried the poor little baby: and I think our offering of a big bunch of garden roses raised us to the rank of royalty in the estimation of the simple folk of Pieve.

Three months later, when our Tyrolean trip was of the past, and lessons had begun again in Munich, Uncle Robert wrote me bitter news. Madge Laurie was engaged to Mr. Herbert Stacey, a very agreeable fellow whom they had met in Venice.

I thereupon gave the mendacious holly-wood bear to Gretchen, our chambermaid, and told Leonard he might walk home with me from the lectures on Perspective.

He need never know that I use him as salve to patch my broken heart.

### BIDDING BY PROXY.

"I MUST have that Cuyp" said Mr. Septimus Palecourt to himself, as he stood gazing intently at a cattle piece, "on view" with several other pictures of various dimensions, exposed in readiness for the next day's sale in a fashionable auction room.

"Shouldn't wonder if I got it cheap," he went on, referring to the catalogue he held in his hand. "Either from ignorance or want of judgment, this gem of a painting is described here as 'attributed' to Cuyp—quite enough to hinder anyone from bidding unless he happens to know better. Attributed, indeed! I should think so, and rightly. A more undoubted specimen of the master never hung on a wall."

After thus decidedly expressing his opinion, and bestowing a farewell glance on the object of his admiration, the speaker put his spectacles and the catalogue into his pocket, and waddling out of the room hailed a passing Hansom, which speedily conveyed him to his home in Thurloe Square.

Now, if there was one thing on which Mr. Palecourt prided himself more than another, it was his knowledge of art; although where he could have picked it up was a puzzle not easy to solve.

He was a stout little man of no patrician extraction, who, having realised a handsome fortune in business, had retired into private life at the age of fifty-two, and taken up his abode, as he was wont to express it, "within a stone's throw" of the South Kensington Museum: of which, as well as of every other artistic exhibition in London, he became an assiduous frequenter. Being afflicted, moreover, with the prevalent "collecting" mania, he very soon converted the fairly spacious house occupied by him into a repository for all sorts of miscellaneous curiosities, more or less apocryphal, the fruits of many an exploring ramble through the highways and byways of the Metropolis.

His special hobby was the formation of a picture gallery, and curious indeed were the examples of different schools unearthed, no one but himself knew where, but vouched for by their owner as originals of unimpeachable authenticity. He had now an opportunity, which he resolved not to miss, of adding to his collection a hitherto unrepresented name; and before reaching Hyde Park corner had already made up his mind in which room he would hang up his acquisition when he got it.

"Women have a good eye for effect," he said. "I'll talk it over with Sophy, but I'm pretty sure she will be of my opinion."

Mrs. Palecourt: one of the few ladies nowadays who prefer adopting their husband's decision to the trouble of thinking for themselves: having, as was anticipated, placidly signified her

approval ; a vacant space on the dining room wall was agreed upon as a fitting place of honour for the coming masterpiece ; and its installation thereon regarded as a foregone conclusion.

Slips, however, between the cup and the lip will sometimes occur, and the next morning's post brought with it a summons which materially affected Master Septimus's plans. It was from an old friend, on the point of embarking the same evening from Portsmouth, who desired to consult him on certain business matters before leaving England.

"There's no help for it," said Mr. Palecourt, after reading the letter aloud for his wife's benefit. "I must go ; so there's an end of it. If he could only have waited until to-morrow."

"Very provoking," chimed in Sophy. "We must hope for better luck another time."

"Not likely," doubtfully replied her liege lord. "Cuyps don't turn up every day. However, I may as well start at once ; and don't wait dinner for me, for I may not be back till late."

Stopping at the nearest stationer's for a "Bradshaw" on his way to Victoria, and hastily consulting that instructive manual, Mr. Palecourt suddenly discovered to his inexpressible delight that he had half an hour to spare before the departure of the train.

"By Jove," he muttered, "I never thought of that ! I have plenty of time to leave a commission with the auctioneer, and that will do quite as well as if I were there myself."

A word to "cabby," accompanied by a suggestive hint of possible largesse, soon brought him to his destination ; and he was at once ushered into the auctioneer's private room, where he briefly explained to that functionary the object of his visit.

"I understand," said the latter. "Number eighty-six in the catalogue : a landscape with cattle and figures, attributed to Cuyp. Certainly ; my clerk shall bid for you, Mr. ——"

"Palecourt, 134, Thurloe Square."

"Very good. How far do you intend to go ?"

"Why," said Septimus, who had not considered that point, "I should think fifty pounds would be ample."

"Better leave a margin, and say a hundred. You wouldn't like to miss it, of course ?"

"Well, no, but a hundred is rather a fancy price. However, you may put it down at that, though it isn't likely to fetch half as much."

"I should be very much surprised if it did," said the auctioneer, and the interview closed ; Mr. Palecourt regaining his Hansom, and succeeding in catching the train for Portsmouth exactly two minutes before it steamed out of the station.

Meanwhile, his wife was relating to her brother who, living close by, generally dropped in for a chat in the course of the morning, the mischance that had prevented Septimus from attending the sale.

Mr. Ferguson, a practical man of commercial rather than artistic

tendencies, shrugged his shoulders. "I should have thought he had pictures enough already," he drily remarked.

"Well, yes, we have a good many," assented Mrs. Palecourt. "But he has set his heart on this one, poor fellow, and I can't bear to see him disappointed. I only wish I could get it for him."

"If you care so much about it," said her brother, "nothing is easier. I'll manage it for you."

"No, will you, Tom?" eagerly exclaimed Sophy. "I don't mind what it costs, provided he has it."

"Very well; give me one of your husband's cards and the catalogue. By the bye, what is the number I am to bid for?"

"Eighty-six; I've marked it in pencil. And come back to dinner, for I shall be all alone, and Septimus told me not to wait for him."

"All right," said Mr. Ferguson, looking at his watch. "Five minutes past twelve, so I needn't hurry, and the walk will do me good."

On arriving at the auction room, he found that the sale had already begun. "I had better not bid myself," he thought, "or they will be sure to run me up. I will get one of those fellows to do it for me." Looking round, he beckoned to a short, florid individual, Shadrach by name, with whom he had had some previous dealings, and gave him the necessary instructions, to which the other responded by an intelligent twinkle of his eye, and quietly insinuated himself among the bidders.

Lot after lot was briskly put up and knocked down, and ere long it came to the turn of eighty-six.

"A landscape with cattle and figures, attributed to Cuyp," proclaimed the auctioneer from his desk. "Shall we say five pounds to begin with?"

A nod from his clerk sitting at the table.

"Guineas," said Shadrach.

No one else making a sign, the contest proceeded actively between the two opponents; the one steadily progressing with pounds, and the other immediately capping him with guineas. When the bidding had reached fifty guineas, a murmur of astonishment circulated among the bystanders; and the Leviathan picture-dealer of Cottonopolis, after a contemptuous glance at the object of their rivalry, honoured the competitors with a prolonged stare, evidently regarding them as a couple of lunatics.

"Twice as much as it is worth," grumbled Mr. Ferguson, "but I suppose I had better go on."

At length the struggle came to a climax; the clerk's final bid of a hundred pounds was followed by the inevitable nod of his adversary; whereupon the former collapsed with a negative shake of the head, and after the usual formula of "No advance on a hundred guineas?" from the auctioneer, down went the hammer, and Shadrach, rejoining his employer, congratulated him on his acquisition.

"See that the picture is brought to-morrow morning to this address," said Mr. Ferguson, giving him the card, "and the cheque will be ready."

"What a surprise for Septimus," said the delighted Mrs. Palecourt to her brother, as they sat dawdling over their dessert. "How pleased he will be!"

"Not so sure of that," gruffly replied Tom. "Rather more than he bargained for, I fancy. However," he went on, as a cab stopped at the door, "here he is to answer for himself; and if you take my advice, you won't say a word about it until he has had something to eat."

When the traveller had recruited his energies with the aid of a "réchauffé" dinner, his wife, unable any longer to restrain her impatience, burst out with the news. "What do you think has happened, dear, since you were away? The picture is yours."

"Is it?" replied Mr. Palecourt, with less enthusiasm than she expected, and wondering in his own mind how she knew it. "What's the figure?"

"A hundred guineas."

"Guineas!" echoed Septimus, not over pleased. "The fellow has gone beyond my commission," he thought.

"Yes," continued Sophy in great excitement. "Tom went down to the rooms on purpose to buy it for you."

"Tom!" exclaimed her husband, thoroughly puzzled. "What had he to do with it? I left a commission myself for a hundred pounds."

"You did?" said Mr. Ferguson. Then, my good fellow, you've made a pretty mess of it, for we have been bidding against each other all the time."

"It wasn't Tom's fault," interposed Mrs. Palecourt, "he did it to oblige me. I was so anxious you shouldn't miss it. If I had only known you intended bidding yourself!"

"Never thought of it until I was half way to the station," growled Septimus, still harping on the unnecessary outlay.

However, when morning came, and with it the picture, its owner, who in the meantime had reflected that after all he had got it at a ridiculously low price, felt equal to discharging his liability, including Shadrach's commission, with a tolerably good grace; and before many days had elapsed, the newly-framed masterpiece occupied the place of honour in the gallery of Thurloe-Square. So elated, indeed, was Septimus with the possession of such a treasure, that he literally talked of nothing else; and it was confidently whispered, by the chosen few invited to inspect the marvel, that poor Palecourt had decidedly Cuyp on the brain.

Some weeks later, while strolling in Piccadilly, he came across a

club acquaintance, Massingham by name: one of those pillars of the turf who, when race meetings are slack, occasionally turn up in London.

"Hullo!" shouted that worthy: "haven't seen you for an age. Still at the old place, eh? I must look you up one of these days."

"Do," said Septimus, profiting by the occasion to introduce his favourite hobby. "Come and lunch, and I'll show you a gem of a picture I have just added to my collection."

"All right. I'm no great judge of that sort of thing, though I ought to be, if tastes followed suit. My father had a fancy that way, and when he died, as paintings are not exactly in my line, I sent the whole lot to the rooms last month, and realised a tidy sum. The best of it was, I regularly floored old Moss."

"Moss?" said Mr. Palecourt, inquiringly.

"Why, I thought everybody knew Moss, the bill discounter: lives in a little street off Holborn. The fact is, a year or two ago I had been hard hit on the Cesarewitch, and was a couple of hundred short when settling day came. So I went to Moss, and managed to get half in cash, and the remainder in a case of the most villainous champagne you ever tasted, and a daub of a picture he called a cattle piece, not worth a fiver, but which he swore (those fellows will swear anything, you know) was painted by some famous Dutchman."

"Not Cuyp," faltered Septimus, beginning to feel uncomfortable.

"That's the name," said Massingham. "Three cows and two chaps smoking their pipes and leaning against a tree. Well, I made up the money somehow, and kept the thing until the other day, when I sent it in with the rest: and what do you think? Two idiots ran it up over a hundred, and I wish the one who got it joy of his bargain. When I told Moss, he was furious. Bye bye, old man; I'll see you before I leave town, and have a look at your 'gem.'"

"I'll take very good care you don't," said Mr. Palecourt to himself, as he walked moodily homewards.

Next day, the apocryphal "Cuyp" was degraded from its high estate, and unceremoniously consigned to the lumber-room; and it is currently reported that our friend Septimus is still in quest of a more authentic work of art to fit into the empty frame.

CHARLES HERVEY.



## THE MISSING RUBIES.

BY SARAH DOUDNEY.

## CHAPTER VI.

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD.

MRS. MILTON came up the stairs with her cap a little awry, and an unusual light in her faded eyes. She was evidently excited; and excitement with her was so rare a thing that Beatrice (herself wrought upon by the strange music), began to feel almost frightened. Had something happened? She hoped that Harriet would speak out soon, and not keep her in suspense.

"Truth is stranger than fiction!" When Mrs. Milton had delivered herself of this little platitude, Beatrice knew that everything must be all right. "I shall never be severe upon novelists any more, for making the most unlikely things come to pass; and in future I shall always believe in Richard's instincts. You may remember he knew instinctively that Mr. Earle was perfectly to be trusted?"

"Oh, has he found out anything about Mr. Earle? You are so slow, Harriet!"

"Beatrice, your hair wants brushing, and you must be quick about it, for we are going to have tea. As to Mr. Earle, he is downstairs with my husband at this moment, waiting quietly for your appearance."

"I must have slept a long time." The girl hurried to the toilet-table, and began to smooth her wavy locks with fingers that trembled slightly. "But does Mr. Milton know Mr. Earle? If there's anything to tell, why not tell it quickly?"

"It can't be told quickly, child, when it's a long story. It seems that after Mr. Earle left you yesterday, he took it into his head to go into the City and seek an interview with Mr. Corder. It was Mr. Corder, you know, who bought my husband's wine business, and he pays Richard a good salary for conducting it. You have heard of that?"

"Yes, I have heard of that. But Mr. Earle said he was without friends—how could he say so, when he knew Mr. Corder?"

"Because he did not know that Mr. Corder was willing to be his friend. It was a happy inspiration that led him to Aldersgate Street; I daresay we shall hear more about it later on," said Mrs. Milton, leading the way downstairs.

Beatrice followed, with a full heart, and a head that was not perhaps quite as clear as usual. It was a great happiness to know

that the man who had been so unwilling to live, had found the rough path of life made easier for his feet. She thought, for the hundredth time, of the pale, set face that she had first seen in the dawn-light of yesterday, and recalled her own passionate resolve to save him from a rash death. She could not tell, then, whether he was saved for weal or for woe; but she remembered a saying of George Eliot's, that "it is but once we can know our worst sorrows," and something seemed to tell her that his darkest hour was past. And the music—that strange pathetic music—was still ringing in her ears; the piteous wailing that had changed into the clear notes of triumphant hope, and everlasting victory.

Godwin Earle looked up eagerly as she entered the sitting-room, and saw her full before him, fresher, brighter than he had ever seen her yet. The light of joy was on her face; the blue eyes shone with welcome as she put her little hand into his. Mr. Milton, who was watching them both with an elderly man's kindly interest in young people, could not divine the secret understanding which gave a quiet gladness to their greeting. And Harriet—well, Harriet had really begun to fear that Beatrice was forgetting some of her most important injunctions, and throwing too much warmth into her manner to a man. The ideal maiden (often described by Mrs. Milton in her governess days), was supposed to assume a little affable, chilly way with the other sex, which always inspired them with the profoundest reverence and admiration. But this way was wanting in Beatrice, and Mrs. Milton was seriously concerned; although she admitted that her pupil was looking very pretty, and had a natural grace which covered many defects.

"Mr. Earle and I are likely to see a good deal of each other in future," said Richard Milton, with quiet friendliness. "And I hope we shall have him here very often."

"You are very good," replied Godwin, heartily. "As I am beginning a new life, I shall want new friends. I have drifted away from a great many old ones lately: or perhaps they have drifted away from me."

"They will probably drift back," said Milton, rubbing his hands with a well-pleased smile. "People have a habit of getting near a successful man, haven't they? And if I mistake not, success isn't very far from you now."

But Godwin shook his head.

"I can hardly take such a sanguine view of my fortunes as you do," he answered. "But anyhow there's a wonderful change for the better. And I feel that I owe *almost* everything to Mr. Corder."

Beatrice understood the stress laid upon that word *almost*, and knew that he had not forgotten his debt to her.

"How strange it seems that your aunt should have been Mrs. Frank Corder, Mr. Earle!" said Harriet, pouring out tea. "My husband was fond of poor Frank as a boy. I never knew anything sadder than

the death of that young couple—one wonders how Mr. Corder could have borne up under his sorrows!"

"And his loneliness," added Richard Milton. "He has not a relative left in the world. Mr. Earle's coming must be quite a godsend to him."

"But you mustn't suppose that he means to make a relative of me," Godwin said, quickly. "He has befriended me, it's true; but he doesn't know yet how I shall turn out. All that he has done—and it's a great deal—is to give me a clerk's place in Mr. Milton's office, and an opportunity of learning the wine business. I don't despair of getting on, but I shan't be worth much, I'm afraid, for years to come. Learning a business is slow work, you see."

"Not so slow as you may imagine, perhaps," returned Richard, in his cheery way. "It depends a good deal upon your grappling power, I fancy. But we are forgetting, Mr. Earle, that we haven't yet thanked you for looking after our charge. It was owing mainly to you, I think, that Miss Ward came to us in safety."

For an instant, Godwin was slightly bewildered. This was indeed a new view of the case, and he began to wonder what kind of story Beatrice could possibly have told. But the girl came to his aid with quiet promptitude.

"I have been telling Mrs. Milton," she said, looking at him steadily, "how I suddenly fainted on my way to the Silverdean railway-station, and you picked me up, and saw me safely through the journey. I wasn't quite myself that morning, perhaps—there had been many things to bear, and I daresay I was unnerved by all my leavetakings."

"Of course you were," chirped Harriet. "You were preoccupied and depressed, and you set off on a long, early walk without eating a good breakfast. It was very silly not to have ordered a fly."

"Still I am glad I did not order a fly," said Beatrice, in a peculiarly quiet tone; "and I daresay it will be a long while before I faint again—I feel very strong now."

So Godwin knew she had kept his secret, and would keep it till the end of her days. She could be silent as well as brave, and the bond between them was strengthened by this wise reserve of hers.

When a man first discovers that one woman is a broken reed, he always begins to doubt the stability of the entire sex. Having found that Alma Lindrick's faith was of a kind that would not bear leaning upon, he had half resolved never to rest again on such an uncertain stay as a girl's heart. But, as those steady blue eyes met his, he said to himself that, after all, there were some women on the earth worth living for. He was no enthusiast, with romantic visions of feminine angels, but an everyday man of the present age, with plenty of knowledge of the world, and of the worst part of the world, and experience had told him that, even with the most perfect of life-companions, there must now and then be a want of unison, an inevitable

touch of disappointment. Yet, something seemed to say that a man might safely put his fate into the hands of Beatrice Ward, and never repent having given her his entire trust.

When he rose to take his leave, the Miltons begged him to return and dine with them.

As has been already said, his old friends had drifted away from him, and there was great need of following Mr. Corder's counsel and beginning again. Many old companions were left behind in India ; and from others Godwin had, himself, proudly withdrawn, with all the morbid haughtiness of a man who feels the time is out of joint. Few knew where to look for him, even if they had desired to find him ; for London is a capital place to get lost in, and Bulstrode-street is well removed from fashionable clubs and promenades. And finding that the clouds were thickening round his life, Godwin Earle had avoided the favourite haunts of those who had once been in his own set, and led a hermit-life existence in the midst of a crowd.

When we come fairly out into the light there are few of us who do not look back, a little contemptuously, on the old selves that walked in the shade. What poor creatures we were in those days ! Why did we persist in silence and isolation when there were ready hands and kind hearts waiting for us among the millions around us ? Why could we not see that, in spite of all its badness, this much-abused old world is by no means destitute of helpers and sympathisers ? Why indeed ? Difficult questions to answer, perhaps ; and yet when the head is sick and the heart faint, one may not have spirit enough to put one's fellow-men to the test. Godwin, walking back cheerfully to Bulstrode-street (after having accepted the invitation to dinner), was disposed to be quite severe on himself for his former misery and deplorable dejection.

In the course of the evening he found an opportunity of saying a few words privately to Beatrice. Mrs. Milton had been called out of the room ; her husband was smoking his nightly pipe among the ferns and geraniums in the little paved yard, and Godwin and Beatrice were left alone.

" So you don't regret your walk in the dawn ? " he said in a low voice. " But, somehow, I can't think it was my true self you saw then ; I hardly care to claim kinship with the man who was so brutally resolved to resist your entreaties. I must have been mad—really mad—at that time ! "

" We all have our mad moments," Beatrice answered. " And I think solitude would soon make me mad. Don't fancy I don't know something of all that you have felt. When I sat alone in an empty cottage, and the twilight was creeping over the little room, I began to have strange fancies. It takes almost a divine courage to go on living when we feel that there is nothing left to live for. And yet, how many people do it, and we never think of them as heroes or heroines at all."

Godwin's thoughts reverted to old Corder ; and Beatrice, hardly knowing why, had suddenly remembered the noble, pale face and sad eyes of Mr. Vordenberg.

"There is an unsuspected heroine very near me at this moment," he said, with a look that brought a faint tinge of pink into the girl's soft cheek.

Just then, Harriet came gliding quickly back again, and Godwin saw that he was not to have another chance of confidential talk that evening. But there would be other chances by-and-by ; he meant to come often to this pleasant house, and later on, when Mrs. Milton had learnt to put confidence in him, he might get many opportunities of having Beatrice all to himself. Later on still, if he found that there was no disappointment in sounding the depths of this girl's heart—but that, indeed, was going a great deal too far. This fresh, unworldly kind of friendship was quite enough for the present, and he had no mind to strain his mental vision by gazing hard into the future.

And yet, although he was "beginning again," he had not entirely done with the past. It takes a long while to tear up an old love by the roots, especially when those roots have grown with a man's growth and spread over his whole life ; and he could not think of Alma Lindrick and her last letter, without a sharp pain. But, as the early summer days came and went, and he began to get accustomed to his work in the office, and even to feel an ever-increasing interest in the business he had set himself to learn, the pain gradually became less ; and the new life, with its plans and hopes, left him little leisure for brooding over the old.

"You are getting on fast, Godwin," said Mr. Corder, one day. He had quickly fallen into the habit of calling the young man by his christian name, and seemed to feel a pleasure in the sound of it. "I hardly thought that you would so soon learn to run in a new groove. And you are looking better, ay, and brighter, than you did when you came to me two months ago."

"And I feel better and brighter, thanks to you," Godwin replied.

"Oh, there are thanks due to other people, I fancy. By the way, I heard Miss Ward saying that she had never seen a play in her life. Will you take her and Mrs. Milton to see the *Merchant of Venice* this evening ? They won't care about being escorted by an old fogie like myself."

Godwin complied, readily enough, and so it came to pass that one or two of his old acquaintances saw him enter the Lyceum that night with two ladies. The three seated themselves in the stalls ; and there was something about Godwin Earle's aspect which made one man say to another that "Earle's affairs must be looking up again." Earle himself, in an irreproachable dress-suit, and with a dainty button-hole, was looking as well as he had ever done in his palmy days. Better, perhaps, for adversity often has a refining influence on a man's face, although it frequently destroys the beauty of woman.

As for his companions, the elder was a quiet little gentlewoman, past middle age ; and the younger was one of those girls who, wherever they appear, are sure to attract the eyes of men. Not that she strove in any way to win notice. To her the whole scene was so delightfully new, that she had forgotten to think about herself at all. But the fresh, soft face, the faultless complexion, and the rippling hair with its golden lights, were not likely to pass unseen, even in a crowd which comprised a good deal of the beauty and fashion of town. The black gown with its heart-shaped bodice, revealed a beautiful neck and throat ; and a cluster of white flowers and maidenhair were her only adornments. She was tall, considerably taller than her chaperon ; and the people near could get a good view of her features and figure as she went to her seat.

In the row of stalls behind Godwin's party there sat a young woman and an elderly man, who both favoured Miss Ward with their attention, and said something to each other in a low tone. The lady was seven-and-twenty, and looked thirty, for hers was a face that is never young when extreme youth has fled. The aquiline features had always been a little too sharp for perfect beauty ; the chin was too prominent ; the lips were too thin. The eyes, rather small, were light blue ; and the complexion (lovely in girlhood) had lost the apple-blossom freshness of pink-and-white, and was slightly faded. But the pale golden hair was prettily dressed ; and a set of good old family pearls added to the wearer's look of distinction. Still, time had not dealt as tenderly with Miss Lindrick as he deals with a woman of large mind and heart.

She was pinched and chilled, partly by training, partly by a certain meanness inherited from her father. The girl whom Godwin had wooed and loved so truly, had slowly changed into a hard woman.

Just as Godwin Earle was entering the theatre, Alma had caught sight of him. She had given him up ; yet in a chilly little way, she very nearly loved him still. Her heart began to throb fast at that first glimpse of his face. He was looking so well, too ; not handsome (many men of less refinement were far handsomer), but haughty, and well set up and prosperous. Yes, decidedly prosperous. Had there by any chance come to him some wonderful change of fortune ? Had anybody died and left him some money ? No, Alma could not entertain that last idea for a moment. She had always been well acquainted with the family history of the Earles, and knew that there was no wealth among them. And in spite of improved appearance, she believed that the taint of a certain suspicion must be clinging to Godwin still.

The old ladies at Meadow House had intended carefully to preserve the secret of his disgrace. But young Olga Gradizoff, silly and incautious, had one day babbled of family matters to the Lindricks, and they had very soon extracted from her the whole story of the loss of the necklace.

Did Alma really believe her lover guilty, or not? She could hardly have answered that question, even to herself. It was not in her to set her heart's love upon a pedestal, high above all reach of slander. Circumstances might have driven him to the deed, she thought; and Olga had seemed perfectly convinced that he knew what had become of the rubies. Perhaps the matter might be satisfactorily explained some day: and yet—would not the stain of the suspicion remain upon him always? She had talked the affair over with her father, and he had not hesitated to say that the evidence against young Earle was very strong. He knew that his daughter kept her liking for Godwin, and did his best to sever the last tie that bound her to an unfortunate man.

Still, although that last tie had been most definitely and completely severed, Miss Lindrick was conscious of a sudden thrill, and then a dull pain. She could not be quite composed when Godwin came into the theatre with that tall girl in black.

Who was she? Alma did not admire her, of course, and felt perfectly certain that she was a nobody. But there is often a dangerous sort of charm about even a plain woman who keeps the "dew of the morning" upon her still. And Alma told herself that she should be really sorry to see poor Godwin beguiled into a low marriage.

And so, in the pause that followed the first act, when Godwin turned his head, his eyes encountered the gaze of those pale eyes which had once seemed to him beautiful by reason of their truth. And for old sake's sake his heart, too, began to throb fast as Alma leaned forward to speak to him.

"How strange that we should meet here!" She was sitting exactly behind Miss Ward, and the high treble voice almost made Beatrice start. "We haven't heard of you for a long time; and yet I have made many inquiries at Meadow House."

"They don't know anything about me at Meadow House." Godwin spoke calmly, but a swift glance had shown Beatrice that his face was flushed. "How are you? Have you been long in town?"

"Only a month; you know I never let papa defraud me of my lawful share of gaiety. But he is just the same as he was in old days, and hates London as much as ever."

Here Colonel Lindrick, feeling himself drawn into the conversation, said something indistinct in a civil tone; and his daughter went on:

"Now, tell me, what you are doing? You are looking very well—much better than you did when you left Fairbridge. I believe you mean to distinguish yourself, and astonish us all some day."

"It isn't very easy to astonish people nowadays," he replied, rather languidly. "They get sated with 'sensation' in every conceivable shape, don't they?"

"I suppose they do," said Alma, without following him in the least. "But you haven't answered me, you know. What are you doing?"

Is it anything very interesting? I always fancied that you would write books, or paint pictures. Don't you remember that I used to say you were a lazy genius?"

" You recognised the laziness, but not the genius." He laughed slightly. I think I shall go to my grave without writing a book or painting a picture."

" Well, but what *are* you doing? Don't you see that I am really very anxious to know?"

Beatrice's ears, abnormally sharp just then, could catch a faint tremor in the voice, which told that this anxiety was not wholly feigned.

" I put off telling you as long as I could, just because I don't like to shock your sensibilities. But if you will have the truth, here it is—I am learning a business."

" A business? Oh, really! But that doesn't mean shop-keeping, does it?"

" Not quite; but it does mean buying and selling."

" Buying and selling what? Ah, Godwin, why are you so reserved? Isn't it natural that an old friend should be interested in all your doings?"

Beatrice, sitting bolt upright, was listening with all her might; and Alma wanted her to listen. Partly to please herself, and partly to annoy "that girl," Miss Lindrick had spoken in a half-tender, half-reproachful tone; the tone that a woman always uses if she has once had power over a man, and desires to revive the old influence. And although Godwin Earle had clad himself in a coat of mail, resolved to be proof against all the blandishments of a false woman, that pleading voice smote him between the joints of the harness, and found out the weak place in his heart.

" There is no need for reserve." He spoke quietly, but not quite in his natural manner. " An old acquaintance of mine has taken me by the hand, and I am learning to be a wine-merchant."

At these words, Colonel Lindrick pricked up his ears, and began to wonder whether they had not dismissed Godwin somewhat prematurely. The Colonel did not like trade, but he liked money; and if a man went in for business at all, a wine business had, he thought, a better sound than any other. Moreover he knew something that no one else knew, and that secret knowledge made him disposed to be very civil to his daughter's old suitor. Alma, although he had filled the air around her with rumours of her wealth, was by no means a great heiress after all.

" Ah, then you are sure to be very rich some day!" Alma was quite in earnest now. " I have often thought that you would find yourself on the high road to fortune. Indeed, I have said the same thing to the aunts at Meadow House—haven't I, papa?"

But that reference to Meadow House was ill-timed, and it had the effect of weakening the impression she had made. To speak

of the aunts was to remind Godwin of their unjust suspicions and cruel mistrust. His face hardened, and his voice grew haughty and cold.

"I have ceased to concern myself very much about my relations' opinion of me," he said, proudly. And then his glance turned to Beatrice, and he got a little smile from her. Miss Lindrick saw the smile, and saw, too, that the girl's profile was pretty. And all at once she discovered that her own heart, usually so cold, was hot and angry ; and she was even conscious of an unlady-like desire to inflict personal chastisement on Godwin's companion. How dared she smile so familiarly on a man who had once been Miss Lindrick's accepted lover ?

The curtain drew up again, disclosing the room in Portia's house, and Portia's fair self reclining on the cushions of her couch, and then came that spirited dialogue between mistress and maid which book-learned Beatrice already knew by heart. She forgot all about the conversation she had just overheard ; her eyes and thoughts were spell-bound by those two graceful women in their rich, quaint dresses, whose sweet accents seemed to give a new meaning to the old words they spoke. With them, in those moments of enchantment, she lived and moved, and had her being ; her attention never wandered for an instant ; her blue eyes shone with happy interest ; and Godwin, looking at the expressive face by his side, contrasted it with the world-wearied faces all around him. Happy girl, to be so fresh and young and easily amused ! He almost envied her the capacity for such intense enjoyment.

Miss Lindrick, still feeling mortified and annoyed, thought the play a great bore from beginning to end ; and inwardly vowed that she would never see anything of Shakespeare's again. It was all so elaborate and unnatural and long-winded, she said to herself ; and it was so exasperating to see Godwin sitting by that girl's side. She could not bear it to the bitter end, and before the curtain rose upon the last act, she had whispered to her father, and the pair quitted the theatre.

Their departure was a relief to Godwin ; but he heartily wished that he had never met them. He was beginning to forget ; and Alma's voice had awakened those sleeping memories that he had lulled to rest.

And so it came to pass that Beatrice found him quiet and grave when the play was over. A shadow had come over him, and Beatrice felt that the atmosphere had suddenly grown chill.

There are women who possess such a happy self-confidence that they can chatter on to a silent companion, convinced that their brightness is sufficient to dispel his gloom. Sometimes they succeed ; but ten to one they fail, and the dejected one votes them a nuisance, who will not let him have a fit of the blues in peace. And there are other women so dense that they never perceive any changes of mood—

women to whom sunshine and shade are both alike. But to neither of these two classes did Beatrice Ward belong.

She was too young and too inexperienced to have acquired that belief in self which often gives a woman great power over a man when it is joined to wisdom. Hers was a sweet and generous heart, ripening by slow degrees. To her love came quickly and self-knowledge slowly.

While they were all driving homeward she was silently wondering at her own girlish dreams—those happy dreams that had brightened her whole life. She had not always guessed where the glory came from ; but it shone over her daily path, and gilded every thought and word and deed. And now, because one face seemed cold and changed, all the light was gone.

She had secretly believed, from the very first day of their meeting, that an unhappy love had played no unimportant part in Godwin's history. Earle was a man whose face had a story written on it ; and such faces generally possess an indescribable charm for young women. They do not know how the story has been written ; they would not, if they were told the truth, believe that sin and folly have printed on certain beloved features that stamp of ineffaceable melancholy. They love him "for the sorrows he has passed," without inquiring why those sorrows fell to his lot. He has been wronged, they say to themselves ; some woman has played him false ; some friend has betrayed him. And so they pity him for imaginary woes, until the pit deepens, unawares, into love.

It was well for Beatrice that the hero of her first romance, although not possessed of many heroic qualities, had more good in him than most of the refined-looking, weary men who lead captive silly women —aye, and wise ones, too.

If she could only have read his thoughts when he went to his room that night, her anxious soul would have found comfort.

No sooner had he left Mrs. Milton and her charge at their own house, than he began to blame himself for his fit of despondency. It was his own fault if a bright evening had had a gloomy ending.

What man in his senses would care for the faint scent of *pot pourri*, when a fresh rose was unfolding its rich heart by his side ? He was just beginning to feel Beatrice's healthy influence stealing over his life, and renewing his youth ; and Alma crossed his path, and disturbed him with words and smiles that were only sweet because they brought with them the perfume of the past.

In spite of all that poets have sung, old things are *not* always best. It is a sentimental feeling that invests bygone days with fictitious glory. Those hearts are happiest that know a second youth in their maturity ; and to men like Earle a second youth means a new love.

(*To be continued.*)

## IN THE SUNSET.

THE day is fading, the west is glowing  
 With tints, whose glory brings back to me  
 A far, fair haven with white sails going  
 Over and over a sapphire sea ;  
 Oh ! far, fair haven—oh ! sea bird flying,  
 I fain would borrow your bold, brave wing,  
 To mount and soar while the day is dying,  
 And follow the red sun westering.

Oh ! sapphire sea, set with gem-like islands—  
 Mine eyes with longing will weary sore,  
 Ere again I see the corn-crowned highlands  
 Which guard and girdle that shining shore !  
 In coigns and clefts that the woodbine covers,  
 Are fairy places I knew of old,  
 Where lips—ah, haply the lips of lovers—  
 Have told the story that once I told !

Fair and quiet, and brightly tender,  
 The low light gilded the wood and lea,  
 For day was dying in royal splendour  
 As we two stood by that western sea ;  
 The soft wind scattered bright, tiny pieces  
 From beds of cloud where the sun reposed,  
 And sent them sailing like golden fleeces  
 In amber skies ere the twilight closed.

The lovely day was so long a-dying,  
 But came at last the enchanting hour  
 When gentle Zephyr, with long-drawn sighing,  
 Shook the scent from the woodbine flower.  
 Then o'er the dusk of the oaks and beeches  
 The young moon mounted her throne afar,  
 And lit with silver the grey sea-reaches  
 Lying beyond the harbour bar.

Ah, Love's sweet words will again be spoken,  
 Like those we breathed on the fragrant air,  
 And Love's sweet vows will be lightly broken,  
 As those have been that we uttered there ;  
 And still the boats will be, wing-like, flitting  
 About the islands that gem the bay—  
 Oh ! human hearts are so long forgetting  
 The bliss and pain of a bygone day !

HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.





M. ELLEN STAPLES.

R. TAYLOR

SHE WAVED HIM ASIDE IN HER WILFUL MANNER.